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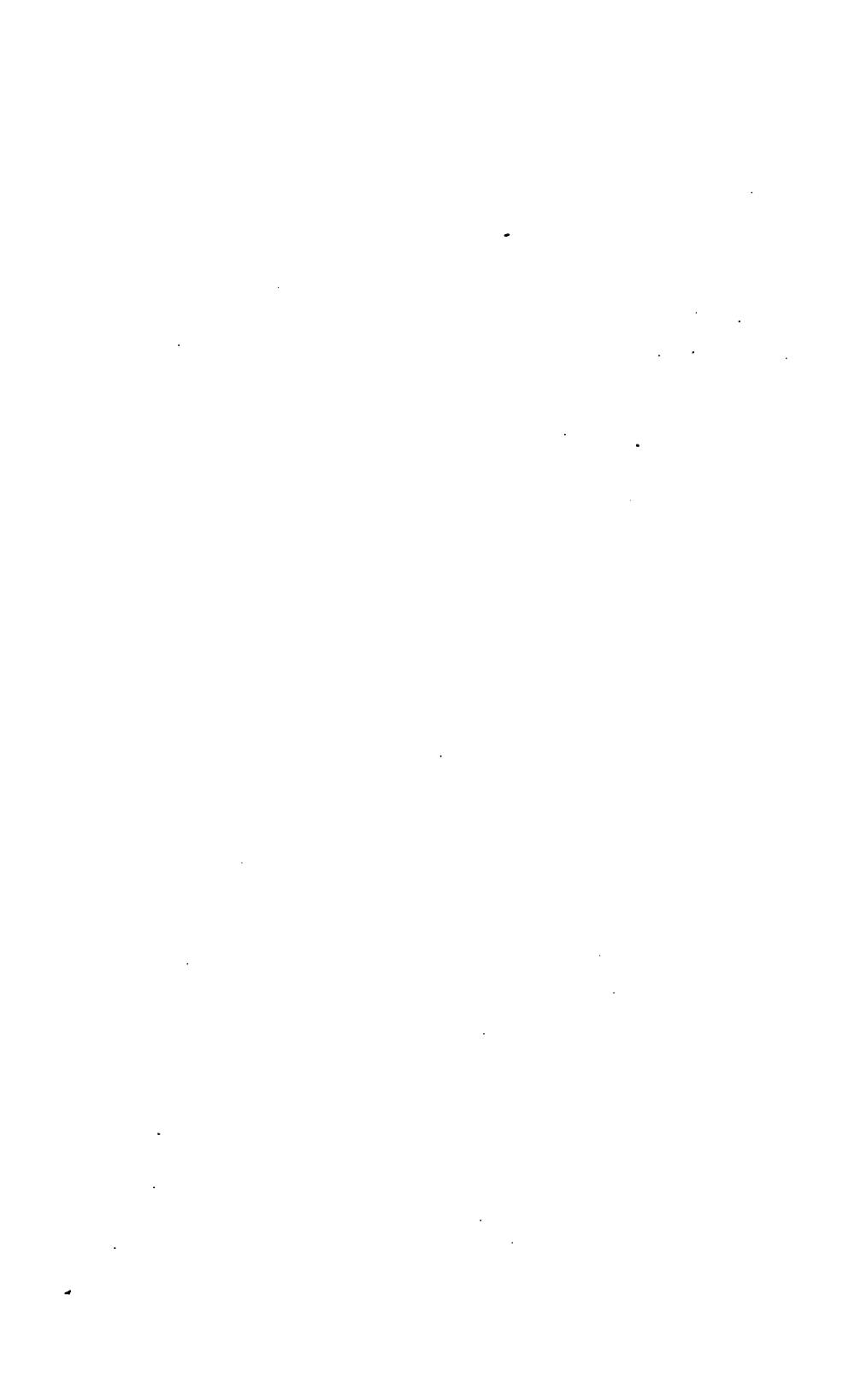
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CHRONICLES OF NO-MAN'S LAND.

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CHRONICLES OF NO-MAN'S LAND

A THIRD SERIES OF "CAMP NOTES"

BY

FREDERICK BOYLE

AUTHOR OF "TO THE CAPE FOR DIAMONDS," "THROUGH FANTEELAND TO
COOMASSIE," "THE SAVAGE LIFE," ETC., ETC.



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DEDICATION.

Addiscombe, *October 7th, 1879.*

MY DEAR MUDFORD,

The first series of "Camp Notes" won for me a place on the great journal you direct, which I am proud still to keep; it is fitting, therefore, that I should dedicate to you the third, perhaps the final series. But those who have your acquaintance will not need be told that I address myself rather to the warm and sagacious friend than to the editor of *The Standard*.

I know very well that your passion for truth will not suffer you to finish one story of my collection before demanding what part is fact, and what fiction. That question I have tried to anticipate in the title. There is indeed a region marked upon the map as "No-Man's Land;"—for that matter, its one Chronicle recorded will be found in a volume of my own, "The Savage Life." The No-Man's Land of which I treat in these pages is not bounded by parallels of latitude. It is the vague realm where human passions work, where the possibilities of life are undefined, so that no one can authoritatively distinguish "What might have been" from "What is." This No-Man's Land is discovered on all the four continents, in Europe as in Africa, and I have used the privilege of the Conquistador in shaping its ideal

boundary as I please. The conscientious artist, however, will not go beyond the lines of truth, arrange them as he may, and of this I assure you, that there is no fact stated, no strange custom or distorted trick of thought, no tone of local colour, which has not come under my own observation, for which I am not prepared to give personal experience. My utmost powers of fancy seem to be exhausted when I have linked two or three broken bits of adventure and made of them one story.

In the service of *The Standard* I have made my later travels, of which, I trust, the end is not yet reached. A feeling which I was not born, or am untrained, to appreciate forbids in this latter day the warm expression of friendship ; but I shall venture to challenge a taste which is neither yours nor mine in begging you to believe me, in no conventional form of speech, most honestly and heartily yours,

FREDK. BOYLE.

To W. H. Mudford, Esq.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
A SLAVE HUNT IN BORNEO	I
A TALE OF THE KAFFIR WARS	15
NOTES UPON SERVIA—I.	31
" " II.	46
A CRIME IN THE WOODS	57
A JEWISH ROMANCE	71
A STORY OF THE TRANSVAAL	84
THE DARK DAYS OF MONTANA	100
THE BULGARIANS	117
THE BALKANS	127
A REALM OF OBI	132
THE CASE OF CAPTAIN SLADE	146
NATIVE GENTLEMEN—I.: BOSSOONOGO	155
" " II.: DOUROUP	165
" " III.: DON HILARIO.	177
THE PROSE OF WARFARE	185
TRIED BY THE FETISH	198
BALLAD POETRY OF ROUMANIA	209
A GAME OF BRAG	217
THE RESURRECTION OF ASHANTI	228
THE RETURN FROM CANDAHAR	244
AFTER THE STORM	267



CHRONICLES OF NO-MAN'S LAND.

A SLAVE HUNT IN BORNEO.

ONCE upon a time I visited Lingga Fort, in Sarawak, a post maintained for no purpose visible unless to show the modest beginnings of Rajah Brooke's sovereignty. His outposts even at that time stood a hundred miles further inland. From Lingga I made excursions in search of game, with but small success. There are deer, however, in abundance, of two sorts, not to mention the pretty palandok, which is an antelope miscalled. Other antelopes exist, with wild cats, civets, honey bears, boars, &c. Lingga, too, is a chosen home of the mias, or orang-outan. Nests of this huge ape abound, and several times I came across his sylvan majesty crawling at a giddy height among the branches of a durian.

One morning I set out for a deer-stalking expedition, and remained several days at a ruinous hut standing in a maze of flowery pasture, with no bush for acres round higher than one's waist. Little hills rose about it, cleared to their tops on the hither side, but crowned with lofty trees. A charred stump here and there preserved the memory of some forest giant which Dyak ingenuity could not overthrow. But even such black witnesses were royally mantled and diademed. The million seeds which had lain in hopeless shadow, rotting beneath the canopy of boughs in a twilight which the sun could never pierce—each and all of

these had sprung to life and run riot in its joy. Delicate orchids shrank and shrivelled in the glare, but sisters less shy and not less beautiful replaced them. Rattans twined like snakes through the springing grass; flowery creepers ran along, climbed every bush in endless convolutions, and burst upon its topmost branches in a glory of triumphant blossom. In the moist ground stood tasselled reeds, which gently curved before hot breaths of breeze. The long grey grass moved like slow waves advancing. Through hours of intolerable heat I watched the purple shadows moving round the trees; I heard the call and twitter of a thousand birds; I saw the lazy, jaunting butterflies dance sleepily from cup to cup. Then the red sunset streamed into my valley, and closed the flowers—mist rose—the jungle lifted up its voice. And I was conscious of a great enjoyment, though of all the deer that made night musical not one could I approach by day.

Whilst I surveyed this scene one morning, a train of Malays emerged from the dusky forest and came towards my hut. Their uniform showed them to be fortmen, and the articles of European comfort on their heads told of a white man with them. Presently arrived my friend H——, the Resident of a fort up country, who was travelling at leisure towards the capital on leave of absence. His business nere was to destroy a mias of incredible voracity, against which piteous complaints had been brought to Lingga. The cunning of this brute was too much for native rivalry, and the Dyaks felt naturally loth to cut down their fruit-trees and thus surround him, as is their trick of catching a mias in the forest. A very pleasant day I passed with my visitor, who, I thought, might be clever with monkeys, yet no better able to find a belling deer than I myself. So it proved when he accompanied me on the nightly stalk. At dawn following he departed, but just as I also set out with pertinacious hope after those deer, one of his men came back, asking the loan of my wood-knife for H——. This implement was a ponderous, old-fashioned twelve-inch blade, a sort of Roman gladius, presented to me by a sympathizing relative

many years before, when I was on the point of setting out on my travels.

The village to which H—— was travelling stood some twelve hours farther on. He reached it in due course. Here dwelt, as officers of government were aware, a rich *nikodah*, or merchant-captain, who had found means to perform the holy pilgrimage. Such fanatics are a curse to every land, sowers of mischief and ill-will, discontented plotters for schemes impracticable, which each fellow-conspirator would oppose if he thought there was a prospect of success. Hadji Mummin was grievously suspected of practices downright treasonable. For this reason or another he did not pay H—— the courtesy of a visit, but bowed to him from the verandah of his house. This was much the handsomest residence for many miles round—a large wooden building, raised on posts, of course, with hewn-log steps to the verandah instead of the notched pole commonly used. Here, as his servants told H——, the Hadji lived with no less than fifteen helpmates. His countrymen felt partly scornful, partly indignant, and wholly jealous perhaps, at such prodigality; for it is not Malay custom, except for nobles, to take more than one wife. As for the Dyaks, they remained utterly indifferent.

There was not another building in the village at which H—— could put up with the comfort to be expected at Hadji Mummin's, but that selfish personage made no sign. When, at dinner, it was casually mentioned that the Hadji had been the chief sufferer by those depredations which he had come to avenge, the anger of my friend boiled up. It is no small offence in the Eastern forests for the chief man of a village to ignore the claims of hospitality, and the circumstances of this case made it flat insult. H—— was a wrathful man, therefore. Sending a servant ahead to announce him, he climbed the Hadji's steps almost before his fifteen wives had spread mats of ceremony and his slaves had lighted candles.

Hadji Mummin met him on the verandah, a fat, round, beard-

less man, whose face turned green under agitation. Standing between two slaves, he spoke a few words of courtesy, smiled, and held out his hand. H—— declined it, walked inside, and sat on the divan. "You have behaved to an officer of the Rajah's government like a boatman, Hadji," he said brusquely—a boatman with Malays is a type of boorishness, as a cabman with ourselves.

The Hadji's face paled, but he said nothing.

"You send to complain of mischief done to your plantations," H—— continued, "and when I come to assist you, no curtains are spread for me, no food is sent me—I am treated like a slave. How is this, O Hadji?"

"My house is not worthy of your lordship's residence."

"And so you send me into the Dyak huts! Your house is indeed unworthy; for," continued H——, quoting from the rhythmical code of law and ethics called the *Lontar*, "'the dwelling of the churl is a sty, though it be built of silver and gold.'"

This speech, delivered in a low tone with perfect coolness, struck the Malays with horror. Their rules of conduct demanded that he to whom such words were addressed should run amuck, to kill or be killed. Perhaps the Hadji had learned more sense in his pilgrimage—perhaps the luxury of fifteen wives had sapped his courage. He replied neither by word nor act, whilst H——, bowing, turned to go. Be sure his eyes were about him, however, and my old knife ready to his hand. The Hadji returned his salute mechanically. As H—— went out he became aware that some members of the harem had heard what passed, for loud and excited whisperings came from a curtain which bellied and twisted with the eager movements of those behind it.

The Malays followed their master back in silence, too much awed to speak. Angry words are rare in the intercourse of that strange people, though angry deeds are common enough. But after H—— had turned in, they whispered the whole night

through, keeping watch over him. Nearly ten years of life in Borneo had taught my friend all the risk of speaking as he had, but it had taught him also that there was little to fear that night. A late comprehension of injured honour might cause the old polygamist to massacre his wives and those about him, but not to seek his foe. Such is the oddest feature of that extraordinary madness called the *meng amok*.

Though, for the sake of his own dignity, H—— would have preferred to leave the mias in tranquil possession of the Hadji's fruit, as the Rajah's officer he was bound to resist a petty feeling. Before dawn he set out, half the Dyak population with him. Tiny warriors, clothed in their innocence alone, ran before him on the dusky path; the mothers of a generation still to be, ran as fast and screamed yet louder—these had a foot of brazen wire or so for raiment. Such a hullabaloo did their united voices raise, that H—— sternly dismissed the whole contingent, and went on with his Malays and guides alone. An instinct transmitted by ages of oppression still forbids the Dyak to make clearings round his house. He would hide both himself and the fruitful evidence of his industry. Daylight could not steal through the thick canopy of leaves above the path H—— traversed, until all the open ground lay clear in the white radiance of morning. Half an hour's walk brought the party to that low hill where Hadji Mummin and others had an ancestral orchard. Mangos and mangosteens were there, loquats, huge durians, lancets, rambutans, an endless list of fruit. Here, of course, dwelt the mias, and the party scattered to seek him. H—— kept the path alone, going slowly, that the hunters might keep pace with him in the thick underwood. But scarcely were they lost to sight, when a woman stepped from behind a tree, and salaamed, raising her hands above her head, and touching forehead, mouth, and bosom.

H—— stood surprised. She was dressed like the wife of a rich Malay, in silk and native cloth. The handkerchief thrown

across her face revealed one fine eye and a rounded cheek. H—— guessed that he “was in” for an unpleasant scene. Sudden passions for the *tuan putih* are not quite unknown to fair Malays, and their recklessness in avowing the sentiment is apt to cause trouble.

“What is your family, dyang?” asked H——, using the formula of a people who think it insult to demand a name direct.

“I am a Milanau, and I was the slave of Hadji Mummin. He freed me by marriage, and I divorced him six months since, but he will not let me go. Therefore I appeal to the white lord, who is an elephant, a lion,” &c.

Here was a situation! In all countries where slavery exists it is the dread of white officials. No act of theirs is regarded with such universal jealousy and rage as the slightest interference with the “peculiar institution.” The civil magistrate has two laws to administer, the English—often impracticable—and the recognized code of ethics. Most difficult, and indeed dangerous, it is to steer a course between these two, for they can never be reconciled, and seldom can either be evaded. H—— tried to escape his difficulty by urging the woman to return. “What will you do if free?” he asked. “You will have to work as a slave.”

“I can go to my own people,” she said, “or to the missionaries. The Hadji ill-treats me because I will not join El Islâm, for I am a Christian baptized. The Sulus took me as a child, and sold me from hand to hand. I ask your protection, tuan!”

This unexpected statement complicated matters still further. After a moment's thought, H—— called his men about him. The younger of them grinned at sight of his companion, but the elder looked for an explanation. The woman's dress and covered face showed her to be Malay of high position, and, of course, Mussulman, as they supposed.

H—— put the woman in the midst, and started back, very anxious and annoyed. Before they had gone half-way, the noise of an advancing crowd reached their ears. A moment afterwards,

Hadji Mummin, with a dozen of his friends, burst into sight, half the Dyak village curiously following them. "There she is!" the Malays cried, and rushed forward. Fortunately the path was so narrow that H—— could bar it with his outstretched rifle. The woman screamed, and turned to run into the bush, but her guardians stopped her.

"The Rajah will know of this!" hissed Hadji Mummin, with difficulty restraining those loud curses which are forbidden utterance to the Malay who respects himself. "Give me my slave, tuan!"

"Lead on to the village," replied H—— firmly. "We are not wild beasts, to dispute in the jungle."

Every gentleman Malay admired the dignity of this remark, which was quite in their own style. They drew the Hadji back, and retired silently. It was a picturesque procession that traversed the village. The friends and servants of Hadji Mummin, in gay head-handkerchief, jacket, tartan petticoat, and waving sash, surrounded the old man, who wore long silk robes and a turban, by privilege of his trip to Mecca. Round them surged a crowd of naked Dyaks, with quick, birdlike eyes. In the wild excitement of this disturbance, they shouted, laughed, and shook their arms aloft. The coils of brazen wire, the snowy bracelets of shell, the innumerable ornaments and charms upon their naked limbs, gleamed in the sun, and jingled. Behind the Malays came H——, very vexed indeed, and his fortmen in jacket of blue, red sash, and white trousers. Amongst them walked the fugitive, cowering in shame and fear. The elders and the maidens of the village had assembled on their high verandahs, and looked down upon the bustling street. It was a great day for Sabuyong.

At the Council Lodge of the Dyaks, Mummin halted. H—— bowed in approval, and followed up the ladder, fortmen and fugitive behind him. It was a round building, like all of its class, and in the midst hung a mass of smoke-dried human heads, strung up on a hoop, like globes of a rude chandelier. All round

ran a platform of logs roughly squared, a seat by day, a bed for the unmarried men at night. On this the party squatted cross-legged, whilst H—— sat like a European in the place of honour; his men round him, and the slave out of danger at his back. The Orang Kaya, or Dyak chief of the village, with his counselling heads of households, took a watchful post, as *amici curiæ*.

It is not worth while to reproduce the pleadings, but perhaps the main contentions of the plaintiff may be thought interesting. He urged, first, that the woman was his slave, bought with his money; second, that the child born to her, whilst it freed her in a sense, did not give to an infidel the privilege of divorce enjoyed by a legal wife; third, that the ill-treatment alleged—itsself a sufficient ground for interference, whether by native or English law, if proved—was an invention; fourth, that the defendant had begun an intrigue, which restored her to the state of slavery. And in evidence of this fact, he pointed out that she had left her child behind.

Upon the other side, it was argued with force, though in tones frightened and shamefaced, that the birth of her child made her either a free woman or a wife, by the law of Islâm. If the former, she exercised her natural privilege in leaving the Hadji's house; if the latter, her divorce was valid, by the same code, at a moment's notice, since she owed no dowry nor claimed any. The intrigue she denied with indignation, asking how it could be believed when her object had been to accompany the tuan to Kuching. As for the child, if he listened to her, she knew he would recover it; she had heard his strong words to the Hadji on the night before. "If I am sent back," she cried, turning to H—— with hands outstretched, "I will throw myself from this verandah and die. Save me, tuan!"

In the excitement of her defence, the veil was cast aside, and she stepped from the low divan amongst them all. The Malays audibly commented on her personal appearance, with that cynic

triviality which is their nature. Without being a beauty, the girl was interesting. Her loosened hair fell to the ground, and her eyelashes curled to the very cheekbone. Like all Milanaus, she had a skin comparatively fair, and features not too irregular. H—— was still more annoyed, of course, to find that his *protégée* had charms sufficient to set scandalous tongues wagging.

The case was pleaded on both sides, and it lay with him to decide. Plaintiff and spectators, even the defendant herself, after that outbreak, chewed betel-nut assiduously. The only motion was that of their jaws, the only sound their eternal salivation, and the light rustle of the hospitable box pushed from hand to hand along the mats. As H——, with thoughtful dignity, put his pipe down to deliver judgment, a great paw touched his shoulder. The white-haired Orang Kaya had crept behind unnoticed, as many a time, in old days, he had crept behind an enemy. "My warriors are all armed," he whispered; "give the word, and no Malay shall be alive in ten minutes."

"The Rajah knows your loyalty, Orang Kaya," H—— announced aloud. "We are all his servants, and those who are faithful obey him. To the Rajah I refer this cause, and he will do justice. I shall take the woman to Kuching, and you, Hadji, will follow."

Again the Malays present expected so great a chief to run amok, and again he disappointed them. The Hadji turned green, his eyes rolled a little, but he wore a smile on rising. His friends regarded him with visible contempt, and crowded down the ladder unceremoniously.

There was no more thought of mias-hunting. The Hadji might be a coward, but those about him would strike a blow if they saw the opportunity. It is not always the slave-owner who shows himself most enraged at interference with the sacred right. The very fortmen were indignant, though discipline restrained them, and their allegiance might be unaffected. Such a force is the institution of slavery for disintegrating all relations social and

loyal. H—— knew each expression of his people, and reflected with some anxiety on the task before him.

When he passed the doorway of the Pangah house, he saw all the Dyak warriors ranged below, stripped and armed for fight. The Malays stood in a little group at bottom of the ladder, afraid to advance, until the Hadji suddenly pressed through them and walked towards his house between the ranks of spearmen. At a word the Orang Kaya dismissed his militia, which scattered in noisy disappointment.

It was but three days' journey to Lingga, but the route lay through a country scarce peopled. No possible reinforcement could be expected on the track, except my rifle. For his own safety H—— had no fear, but that the woman would be stolen he entertained doubt as little. A man cannot pass three days and nights in watching, and his fortmen, true to the death as they would be in his defence, could not be relied on to prevent kidnapping. H—— considered and rejected as unworthy the idea of taking a guard of Dyaks; the uncertainty of a messenger prevented him from summoning me; and there was no garrison at Lingga to draw upon. He resolved to go by water if it was feasible. The Orang Kaya stated that the rapids which made ascent difficult at this time of year offered no serious obstacle to a canoe descending. Had it been otherwise, Hadji Mummin would never have settled in such a spot, for a Malay shut off from water traffic would pine in misery. When a large canoe had been quietly prepared, and a dozen stalwart little Dyaks sat with paddles poised, H—— suddenly announced his intention. If Hadji Mummin had planned mischief, he was disconcerted, and the fugitive reached Lingga without meeting foe or friend.

But the troubles of her guardian were not yet passed, as he knew well. To withdraw as far as Kuching even one of the six soldiers who kept formal ward at the fort would have been a grave responsibility. There was no one else to be depended on in such a case, saving, of course, the missionaries. A messenger

to myself failed to discover me, for I had gone farther inland, seeking those invisible deer which made themselves so distinctly audible every night. H—— had no time to lose. The Orang Kaya informed him, as agreed, that Hadji Mummin had left Sabuyong but a few hours after his own departure. Leaving his charge at the fort, he paddled to the mission at Banting.

Needless to say that the good folks there were enthusiastic and excited about these events. Christian slaves are common enough in Sulu and even in Brunei, but they seldom drift so far down the coast as Sarawak. With fervid courage these kindly gentlemen and ladies offered to brave all Islâm in arms if H—— would leave the girl with them ; but the rashness of their proposal was displayed when he asked what escort the mission could afford him. Even for such a purpose, two Chinese youths and a Dyak boy exhausted its resources. None of these had met sights more alarming than an angry clergyman, and H—— concluded that upon the whole he would be safer without their aid. The mission had boats, however, and crews thereto belonging—people keep a boat in Sarawak, as they keep a carriage in England. ' H—— accepted a large one for himself, and a canoe for his charge. He could not travel with her, and he did not like to trust her with his Malays. The mission ladies found him a woman to bear her company, and in process of time the chaperone turned up, only twelve hours behind time—which is near enough for a man in the East, much more a woman.

The fugitive was picked up at Lingga Fort. H—— had his own three servants, quite reliable for a row, and two Dyak chiefs of his Residency, on their way to see the capital—these would certainly fight. The Malay crew of the sampan numbered six, of whom he knew nothing, and the missionaries little more. The canoe was attached by a chain ; it carried three men, the ex-slave, and her attendant. H—— expected the attack to be made, if such a bold proceeding should be decided, between Lingga and the river mouth. He started, therefore, in broad daylight, and

kept the middle of the stream, which is a mile and a half broad. Plenty of boats they passed, as usual, for the Batang Lupar is most frequented and populous of all the fine rivers in Borneo. Nightfall saw him at the delta, with the open sea before, and danger passed. But H—— would run no risks, and he resolved to spend each night ashore, since there was no moon to show an enemy approaching.

A wooded island rises opposite the Batang Lupar, called Trissau. As he passed it next morning H—— observed a large prau lying in the shadow of its trees. There was no one on board, but, glancing back, he saw the crew come out and clamber into her. Nothing suspicious in this, and when H—— saw the vessel hoist her sail, and scud seawards before the wind, he paid no more attention. His own course lay along shore, at just such distance as cleared him from cape to cape. The day passed without adventure, and before sunset he turned at right angles, making for the beach. His crew grumbled a little, for this proceeding entailed a heavy pull, but there was nothing to cause alarm. The night passed quietly, so did the next day and the next, on sea and shore. Many vessels were seen at a distance, and many canoes passed within hail. A straight run of three days will take a sampan from the mouth of the Batang Lupar to that of the Sarawak, but the way H—— was steering it could not be done under a week.

On the fourth morning, an examination of the chain showed that the staple holding it was broken. H—— scrutinized suspiciously, but the fracture was quite clean, and the stolidly careless faces of the crew disarmed him. With a malediction on dishonest blacksmiths, he replaced the chain with a rattan, and started. It was a lovely morning. Stimulated by the bright air, the breeze, and whispering ripples of the sea, he stood out for a "longer leg" than usual. Under the same exhilarating influence, he allowed himself a nap, after the fatigues and anxieties of night watching. The monotonous lap of the wavelets which rocked him, the slow

creak of the sheet, and the drowsy songs of the Malays crouched for'ard, dozed him off again and again. The Dyaks woke him finally, and he sat up in alarm. All the sky to eastward lay low and black upon the sea. Sickly white sunshine glimmered on the forward path, but the wind had fallen. Both crews were paddling eagerly for shore, which showed a dark blue line above the water, at considerable distance. Without wasting time in reprimand, H—— ordered the mast to be unshipped. It was scarcely done when the squall descended—burst in a screech of wind—wrested the mast and threw it overboard, heeled the sampan gunwale under. Amid shouts and prayers, H—— cut the fastenings of the kajongs, which whizzed headlong over the sea. Though the boat righted, such great waves uprose as threatened to swamp her. They surged up in one simultaneous bound ; in a moment's space the ripples swelled to ponderous hills of water. Sheets of rain skimmed along the sea, mist and spray wrapped the boat like a curtain. Thought is scarcely quicker than the change. But as that veil closed round, H—— saw, or believed he saw, a craft emerge from the whirling darkness, and shoot across their trail. He crawled hurriedly to the tow-rope—it came loose to his hand.

For half an hour they ran before the storm. A soaked mattress held by men prostrate in the bows kept the sampan spinning at an awful rate. The Malays had all stripped to swim ; through teeth chattering with cold, they commended their souls to Allah, or shouted unmeaningly as inaudibly. Almost as suddenly as it had begun, the hurly-burly ceased. For some moments more the rain fell, then lightened, then gave over—the mist vanished—and from the top of mountainous rollers they saw land at fifty yards' distance ; they saw also the canoe beating upset on the sands, and a large prau just making shore beside it.

H—— snatched a paddle and turned his sampan to intercept. Summoned by their master's call, Dyaks and servants seconded him, for the crew sat uncomprehending or unwilling. It was a

race not ill-matched. The pursued had more men, but a heavier boat, and both together came as near the sands as it was safe to venture without waiting an opportunity. At that point the other crew suddenly leaped overboard, abandoning their vessel. H—— did not hesitate. Gripping my knife between his teeth, he plunged into the rollers, dived, found footing ;—blinded, buffeted, he gained the shore.

But the pursued were quicker. With a cry of fury and dismay, they watched H—— advancing. He recognized the Hadji, and, grasping his knife, rushed at him. But Malays are not easily caught betwixt sea and forest. Some ran to the near jungle, others, with the Hadji, dashed again through the surf, gripped their vessel tossing on the rollers, and swung themselves aboard. They caught up the paddles, those still in the water shoved, and before justice could reach them they had recovered control of their prau. H—— ran waist deep into the surf. Swung off his legs, he swam. But it was of no use. The Hadji leaned over and mocked him as the boat fast drew off. In the last effort of rage, H—— struck with all his might. Perhaps he injured his enemy—for certain, he made a great gap in the edge of my knife.

“And what became of the fugitive?” asked every one in Sarawak, when this adventure was reported.

“I cannot tell,” H—— used to answer. “I half think I saw some women lying in the prau, but it may have been fancy.” The Hadji would care very little whether his slave was recovered living or dead. If it was the former case, I pity her, for Malay laws against torture do not apply to runaways. Hadji Mummin was not heard of so long as I stopped in the country, and his fifteen wives remained, not disconsolate it was given us to understand, in a state of widowhood.

A TALE OF THE KAFFIR WARS.

THE Kaffir has few friends, and those not remarkable for judgment; but perhaps he has more, and better, than he deserves. Cruel and treacherous he is in war, brutal and lazy in peace. More agreeable is it therefore to note any trait of chivalry in his character, since it may give a faint hope that under other circumstances he might become a less savage being. But, for my own part, I have not quite despaired of the Kaffir since hearing the story I am about to tell. It was related by an officer now high in the colonial service, and the experience of others might be given to show that the main incident is not unparalleled. Be it observed that the Basuto Kaffirs, of whom I write, are neither the bravest nor most hopeful of the Negroid races.

In 1861, if I recollect the date exactly, my friend was stationed near Hebron, then called Schmutsdam, after a storekeeper who had settled there. The usual signs of disaffection had prevailed for some time past. Cattle vanished by wholesale, travellers were robbed in the veldt, and in the towns Kaffirs grew insolent. Most significant of all was the desertion of shepherds and other servants, which is a sure warning of trouble. No dwelling of white man could be found in a day's ride about Schmutsdam, and the trader himself had fled with all he could carry. My friend, whom I will call West, dwelt in his shanty, and guarded such stores as were left. He had five native police under his

command, and his duty was to watch for stolen cattle passing, and to keep his eyes open generally ; for in districts remote and thinly peopled, the war-cry is most often raised at the beginning of disturbances. Several times already West had heard of one chief or another issuing the summons, but all denied the charge when he rode thither to demand an explanation. The farmers, however, had taken fright, and many had trekked towards civilization. Others were anxious to "go into laäger," a step which my friend discountenanced as much as he dared ; for when the panic-stricken and the reckless get together in these travelling camps, they are pretty sure to make a crisis between them. In short, the frontier was agitated.

West's force consisted of a Basuto corporal, two privates of the same tribe, and two Zulus. One morning, before dawn, he was roused by the officer, who stood at his bedside. "You must get up, sir," he said, with an air of respectful command, in his own language.

"What for?" asked West, but half awake. "Is there any news?"

"There is news from my king," said the Basuto, putting down his candle. "When you are dressed, we will talk." He passed out, and West sprang to his feet. He knew what was coming, and snatched at his holsters. The pistols had vanished. Hurriedly equipping himself, for no escape was possible, he went into the outer shed. The five police stood there in line, fully dressed and armed. A fire brightly blazing showed the brown faces of the Basutos, very grave and resolute, and the darker features of the Zulus grinning with curiosity. It was no business of theirs.

The corporal stepped forward, saluted, and explained himself in few words.

"My king has raised the war-cry, sir, and his messengers have come to summon us. Your horse is saddled at the door, all your clothes packed, and rations in your saddle-bags. If neces-

sary I would have conducted your honour to Aliwal, but constables Tonda and Ngundele will ride with you. They are not my master's servants. Right face! *March!*"

The men filed out, West after them. It could have done no good to talk. Light was just stealing over the misty veldt. Tall white clumps of heath glimmered like spectres; the ant-hills, ponderous and shadowy, seemed huge beasts watching. Nothing higher broke the weary level for a score of miles about. No help lay anywhere.

All the horses stood ready, those of the captain and the Zulus apart, by a little pile of goods; West recognized it as plunder of Schmut's store. A larger heap lay beside the other horses. The corporal halted his men outside, and they all presented arms as West got into his saddle. "Constables Tonda and Ngundele, fall out!" cried the Basuto. "Set down your arms, and load your baggage!" The Zulus expeditiously strapped their share of the plunder on their horses, grinning the while in high delight of mischief. Then they went to pick up their arms, but the corporal cried, "Mount!" and stepped forward to intercept them.

Up to this, things had gone as smoothly as could be, to the satisfaction of everybody whose approval signified. But this move broke up the harmony of the proceedings. The Zulus saw what was intended, and, quick as thought, one sprang upon the corporal, whilst the other dodged round and seized the fire-arms. Leaving his comrade to deal with one enemy, Tonda covered the nearest private, and swore to shoot him at a motion. The Basutos stood bewildered, whilst Ngundele threw the stately corporal, and came off laughing. Then he took his carbine, and kept guard while Tonda mounted. They withdrew warily, one leading his comrade's horse, and the other walking backwards, prepared to shoot at the least provocation. But the Basutos kept still, watching them out of sight.

Presently, Ngundele also mounted, and rode after West, the

Zulus laughing with vengeful glee over their triumph. It was sheer idiotcy in the corporal to suppose that such men would give up their arms whilst they could wag a finger. The dream of a Kaffir's life is to possess a gun. For that treasure only he will fight or work in a cheery spirit. Had West found it necessary to disarm the least dangerous of his men, he would have taken all precautions to master him beforehand. It is characteristic of the Basuto that he took no precautions at all, thinking apparently that his bare command would overawe the proudest, most weapon-loving of all Kaffirs, and make them endure the bitterest humiliation. But it was no new thing for West to learn that negroes in authority understand their own people less than do white men—or forget what knowledge they have, in the pride of a little brief authority.

The Zulus behaved as respectfully as ever towards their captain, riding at a proper distance in the rear, until he called them up to ask whither they were taking him. "Wherever your honour likes," one answered.

"To Aliwal, then. What shall you do if we meet Basutos?"

"We have their king's password, sir. They won't harm us."

This assurance was comforting, since they could not hope to get through without meeting parties of the enemy. All those servants who yet lingered in farms and villages would be on the march, and to escape their quick eyes, on such ground, was simply impossible. Most of the Basuto lands are veldt, long plains covered with a scanty herbage. Here and there droops a lonely bush of thorns, clothed in grey dust. Miserably barren is the prospect for ten months out of twelve, but the short season of flowers had just begun. The desert bloomed with colours innumerable. Spikes of amaryllis rose from great withered globes, like footballs; garlands of cassia, stars of creeping ice-plant, carpeted the soil. The hot air quivered even now, an hour after sunrise, whilst a long blue shadow still travelled abreast with the horsemen. Light puffs of breeze cut through it from time to

time, lifting the dust, and whirling it up in a brown column, which danced over the veldt, rising higher and higher, thicker and faster, until, suddenly as it rose, the gust died away, the moving column dropped, and all that remained was a small heap of sand, curled to an apex.

All round, the antelopes were grazing, tawny springbok, striped from chest to tail, brown blesbok, and grey hartebeest. In 1861 such game could be found in the colony itself as now one must seek hundreds of miles inland. West could see ostriches scurrying from his path, little herds of quagga warily feeding, even perhaps a pair of camelopards. A thicker cloud of dust in the endless flat would show him where a troop of playful gnu were romping. Nay, he might catch a glimpse of some old lion stealing through the dry water-courses towards its den in the hills. These beasts are extinct ; but now, as then, the veldt is alive with common antelopes, and birds, and pretty siricates, and marmots, and many-coloured reptiles. The great paaw-bustard stalks over the flowers, the secretary hunts for snake or lizard, Kaffir cranes or crested mayhens fly overhead on whistling wing. Pretty meercats gallop homeward, or sit watching, like kangaroos, ready at a sign to whisk their tails and plunge headforemost into the earth. Slow, fierce rattels peer round an anthill, on which the puff-adder suns his bloated carcase. Locusts, scarlet and green, hang lazily on the bush which they will devour at evening when the dew has moistened it. Life is dense in these unpeopled plains of South Africa.

A day's hard riding would carry West to the nearest settlement, but beasts of burden lose all heart in Cape Colony if deprived of their outspan. They are used to rest at intervals of an hour and a half or so, and three hours is as long as they will go cheerfully. At the first outspan West visited his saddlebags, and found there an ample ration of biltongue—meat cut in strips and dried. Setting out again, he reached the hills without seeing a warrior. At several Kaffir kraals, passed at a distance, the oxen and horses

were gathered in large herds, ready to travel. Troops of naked children mounted guard over them, whilst their mothers packed the skins and pots and household goods which satisfy a Kaffir's luxury. At noon West gained the foot of those blue and misty hills which had bounded his horizon all day. If South African plains are unlike any other scenery, South African mountains are yet more curious to behold. They rise straight from the veldt, huge blocks of naked sandstone, wind-worn and water-worn at top into the semblance of ruined towers. All the range has one equal height, and the broad crowns are smoothed as if with a plane. Along the base lies a heap of rocks fallen from above, amidst which spring a few thorns and flowers. Here and there the barrier parts, and leaves a winding defile, called locally a kloof. Trees are found there, if anywhere, amidst the pebbles and grass, but at the best they are gnarled and prickly shrubs, bearing almost as many nests as leaves. For the numberless birds of South Africa are mightily put to it for building room, and when they find a tree suitable, they cover it with grass until it looks like a ruined haystack.

When West issued from the kloof, he saw the plain beyond alive with Kaffirs on the trek. An advance-guard of some score horsemen halted with alarm at sight of him. Two hundred yards behind, three or four waggons came suddenly to a stand, and woolly heads poked out of the tilt. Several hundred men on horseback followed the waggons, keeping a decent order. Many of these wore European articles of dress, male or female, plundered from the farms along their route. After the warriors, a crowd of women and children, some mounted on horses or oxen, some afoot; and behind them, as far as one could see for dust, the veldt was thick with cattle, pressed on by galloping drovers, who screamed and cracked their whips and shouted in glee. If West had had a few English troopers after him, such a massacre might have been made as that which panic-struck all Kaffirland some years later, when, concealed by fog, two

squadrons of the 6th Dragoon Guards came upon a tribe thus trekking.

At the mere glimpse of a white face, terrible confusion rose. The advance-guard galloped back on the main body, throwing their assegais without aim. The women screamed and fled, and those in the waggons tumbled out, one on another. A fat old chief, wearing a Dutch housewife's cappie and her husband's hat on top, threw himself to the ground, and ran for life. Younger chiefs, springing on their horses barebacked, pushed to the front, clearing a way with their assegais. For an instant West ran the greatest danger, but the Zulus pushed before him and shouted the king's password. It was instantly effective, and the fat chief, mounted and reassured, gave orders that the fugitives should be brought up. West had known him long, and many a warm dispute the two had had upon questions of stolen cattle, beacons, and such-like. But the old chief proved to be a good fellow, and in shaking hands, professed himself delighted that the king had shown mercy. "Ride on quickly," he said, however, "for my young men are mad. Powder has been burnt. The boers of Falkesfontein are gone into laäger, under the hills. Tell them as you pass that Bela has not run away. When he has put his cattle and his wives in safety, he will return to warm himself in their camp. If they are there to-morrow night, not a man shall see the dawn."

West promised to give the message, and rode on, the Kaffirs of his acquaintance grinning amicably, and the chiefs shaking hands. But when his Zulus tried to follow, Bela challenged them imperiously. "Who are you?" he cried.

"Servants of King Panda," they answered, in the *civis Romanus* style. Servants of King Panda were as overbearing in their day as servants of King Cetywayo, his son, in ours. But the Basutos cared little for a monarch who could not reach them.

"Give up your arms, Amazulu!" ordered Bela, and upon his sign half-a-dozen brawny fellows laid hands on the policemen. In

vain they pledged their master to deeds of awful vengeance. The Basutos laughed, for it's a far cry to Zululand, and disarmed them in a twinkling. Then, amidst whoops and laughter, the Zulus were hurried through the crush, and dismissed with a lash of the sjambok.

Suddenly calmed, they rode for an hour, until the last of the cattle had gone panting by. It was the hottest hour of the afternoon, when next the fugitives outspanned. The Zulus sat silent and gloomy, West observing them with interest. Tonda produced at length his bag of hemp, mixed with tobacco and what not, cut a hole in the earth, and a channel or drain leading into it, filled the hole with his smoking mixture, roofed the channel, threw a bit of charcoal on the tobacco, and, stretched at full length, sucked the smoke into his belly. When that receptacle could hold no more, he lifted his mouth from the ground, rolled over, and coughed for five minutes, while Ngundele took his place, and did likewise. How their frames held together, wrenched and twisted with such coughing, was a marvel. When at length the fit had passed, each opened his mouth, lying supine, and poured out all the smoke in a pillar, as through a chimney. Wonderful it is to observe the Kaffir in this, his favourite enjoyment, which a white man cannot imitate, or would die in the endeavour if he tried.

The Zulus lay quiet and stupified until West called them to the saddle. Then they rose and took dust in their hands. "Panda is our king," they muttered, "and on his head we swear Bela's life." Throwing up the dust, they mounted, having doomed themselves to death or vengeance. A little beyond the spot, a patrol of boers appeared, who greeted West as a man returned from the grave. They guided him to the camp, which was held by forty white men, three women, strong of limb and heart, and twenty servants, Kaffir or Hottentot, who could be relied on. The feeble and timorous had left the neighbourhood, and those brave souls who rested had mostly sent away their

wives and children. There were arms and ammunition in plenty.

One word is needful in description of a *laäger*. When trouble rises on the frontier, and lonely farms are not safe to dwell in, the men consult, and name a place of rendezvous. Hither they all betake themselves, with such of their goods as they can carry, in the huge Cape waggon, driving before them oxen, horses, even poultry. At the appointed spot the fugitives outspan, ranging their waggons in a circle or an oval. Between the tail of one and the head of another, ox chains, cunningly entwined with ropes and stakes and boulders, complete the defence. And so they wait until the danger passes, or becomes too serious to face, moving the camp as pasture fails; the herds being driven inside the circle on alarm. In such landscapes as I have described, an enemy can scarce approach without giving notice enough, and the *laäger* will sometimes remain "out" for months, whilst its inmates dare not go home, nor are willing to fly.

West gave his message. Upon the one hand it was known that Bela had been summoned to join the king in person, and dared not delay. Some of the more reckless boers, patrolling, had met a party of scouts laden with plunder, and had killed several; otherwise, Bela would have marched past. What the garrison had to fear was a short fierce attack in tremendous numbers. If they could repulse it, as they had reasonably good hope of doing, Bela could not dare renew the attempt, whilst his merciless sovereign waited for him. Upon the other hand, it was more than likely that the Kaffirs would overtake them on the march, if they broke up their camp and tried to withdraw. In a running fight, such assailants would have immense advantage. But the boers were more likely to get help the nearer they approached the Orange, whilst by remaining in *laäger* they were sure of incurring great loss. Much, therefore, could be said on both sides, and at length the question was referred to West. He strongly advised them to await the enemy in their fortification;

adding, when the other party had given way, that he would bring help from Aliwal as fast as he could ride. But this proposal caused a furious outcry against the skellum Englander, as in their passion the boers called him frankly. Was he going to desert them? They had arms for him and his Zulus also. West tried for an instant to show why he disliked fighting even Kaffirs who had acted so generously; but his audience understood no such feelings. They thought and said that the Basutos had behaved like fools, and that the generosity of a Kaffir binds no one. These arguments had no effect, but West was puzzled to reply when the boers asked him how he, an officer of police, could be influenced by personal considerations when two score lives were at stake? So he gave way, and they nominated him captain of the laäger. A mounted Hottentot set off at once with a letter asking aid.

For the remainder of that day and the next forenoon, all hands worked to strengthen their defences. The camp was not pitched in a spot quite satisfactory, for upon one side the width of a "dam," or pool, alone divided it from the hill-side, where were boulders and shrubs high enough to shelter a crawling enemy; but to go farther off would have been to risk the water-supply; and besides, the boers were too indolent to move. At noon on the day following, the cattle were all fetched up, each man told to his post, and the ammunition divided. In dumb anxiety the white men expected their foe. Towards three o'clock a little cloud of dust rose up, miles away over the veldt. Spreading and thickening it drew nearer, nearer, till blurred figures began to loom through it, and little stars to glitter. At a half mile's distance the horizon was veiled in that lurid fog, which curled and puffed below, and streamed like wisps of smoke behind. Gradually it dropped, settling down. First came into sight the uncouth heads, decked with ostrich plumes, and the shoulders gleaming with red paint and perspiration; then the horses tossing their fronts and pawing; then five hundred black horsemen in a line. Their chiefs stood in the midst consulting, and

presently, a number of the warriors filed off to right, whilst a smaller body went to left, and the remainder sat still. The enemy meant to attack on every side at once.

As the squadrons moved off they began to chant their war-song. A negro singing alone makes sport for gods and men, but five hundred voices raised together creates such martial music as is not heard without a thrill. But the boers were not unused to it, and they began to count guns, observing with relief that the foe had no more than ninety, all sorts included. The Zulus pointed out to West his ex-corporal riding beside a chief who wore the uniform of a private in the police. The corporal still kept his own, with his gun. At a given spot half the larger column halted, the remainder still riding towards the hill. At its foot they dismounted, leaving their hobbled horses with a guard, whilst they clambered over the rocks to complete the surround. When that was finished there was a pause. "Why do not the others dismount?" muttered West to his Zulus, who kept by him.

"The Basuto fools mean to fight this war on horseback," said Ngundele; "so the corporal told us."

West saw that if in the open field this new tactic ensured defeat for the Kaffirs, it might have effect in this case on which the enemy had perhaps not reckoned. There is often peril as great within a laäger as without, for cattle frightened or wounded dash this way or that in ponderous masses, seeking escape. This danger, always present, is vastly increased in an attack of mounted men. Their swift advance enables almost all to throw a dart into the enclosure, though they die in the act. West had only time to rush round, ordering every man to creep beneath the waggons, before the cavalry charged, yelling, singing, clattering. Many fell in the rush, and others rolled over them, but many came up close to the waggons, hurling their assegais the while. A score of wounded oxen set the caballada madly galloping, running abutt at every aperture. The chains and barricades held firm, but so

tremendous was the impact that huge vehicles rocked half over and fell again. Ngundele was too slow in leaping on a waggon, and the herd tossed him yards away, swept over him, and trampled his body into shapeless pulp. But the boers could spare no heed for the row behind. The Kaffirs were on them hand to hand, thrusting their assegais amongst the wheels, transfixing any limb exposed. But each shot told, and the horses, dropping as it were in line, prevented near approach. Nor could foes dismounted use the new barrier to cover their assault. For squadron after squadron succeeded in the ringing charge, and trampled down the footmen. Assegais rained into the camp, redoubling the panic of the oxen, whose hoofs made thunder on the ground. But the mad attempt to storm a fortified position with cavalry was evidently doomed to fail, and its issue presaged the result of other actions in the war to follow.

Upon the dam-side, where Kaffirs fought with commonsense as well as bravery, they fared not so ill. They crept along, and delivered no random spear. When West snatched an opportunity to run across the circle he found the foe firmly posted on the dam's farther bank, and several gaps in his own line. They lay close, covered by a rock or bush, but from time to time one sprang into sight, the assegai whistled from his hand, a dozen roars flamed, and the savage vanished. If all the Kaffirs had attacked in this manner, the fight would have been terrible; but their new pride of horsemanship ruined the Basutos. West summoned a few men who could be spared to reinforce the detachment on this side; then he got out the wounded, lifting them into a waggon whose strong sides were most likely to resist the enemy's darts; for the attack elsewhere had ceased awhile, though the Kaffirs showed no sign of withdrawing. They stood round their chiefs, who eagerly discussed the situation. The boers, also, on this side, crept from amongst their waggon-wheels, and assembled to hold council. Few men were wounded, and none killed, whilst scores of the enemy dotted the space all

round. But they felt no inclination to triumph, so long as the Kaffirs kept the field. Light began to fail, and in a night attack numbers will tell. Man for man, the defenders were not equal to their antagonists. Ponderous and big and strong, the boer can crush the Kaffir by sheer weight ; but he, all fire and sinew, gives muscle not a chance. It was likely that the supply of assegais was exhausted, but in the dark other weapons would be used. West moved from group to group, listening anxiously to the opinions of these men, few of whom had not his story of fight. Knowing well the character which boers gain in their lonely, silent, independent life, he was not surprised to see that they meditated escape. They knew, quite as well as he, the enormous risk. They knew that a proportion of them would surely die, and that their waggons, the oxen, and the property they loved must fall to the enemy. But every man for himself is a lesson which their existence daily teaches, which no consideration for others' sufferings can temper.

I do not wish to be hard upon the boers. What they are circumstances make them ; and English stupidity, English want of feeling, have greatly aided circumstance. If Exeter Hall has produced most feeble results upon the heathen, it has sorely affected the boer. Exeter Hall and red tape have made him an outcast, deprived him of his simplest rights, harassed him to hatred of all things European. Generations of lonely existence, amidst peril and hardship, would in any case have impaired his amiability ; but our thoughtless rule was needed to make him the recklessly selfish creature we see.

West spoke to the men with such warning eloquence as he could command ; reminded them that Bela dared not stay beyond dawn ; appealed to their pride. But boers are little moved by talk. Then he urged the danger to which they would expose their women ; but these, resenting the pity of an Englishman, declared that where the husband went the frow could follow. Barely a dozen backed West in his resolve to hold the laäger, and unless

all stood all must go. Words ran high, and charges of cowardice passed freely. The boer language is singularly frank, and if Englishmen had said to one another things as rude, bloodshed would have followed. At length the majority, now all assembled, declined further argument, and withdrew, each to secure his valuables and his horse. At the same instant the council of feathered warriors broke up. Their movements could scarcely be seen through the mist and dew which blurred the veldt. West appealed to his remaining Zulu, and that savage left for a moment his comrade's body, climbed upon a waggon-pole, and looked long. "The Basutos are tethering their horses," he said coolly, "and they are spreading to attack us all round."

"Every man to his place!" cried West. "The Kaffirs are on us! For your lives, hurry!"

Those near had heard the Zulu's speech, and the commander's loud voice overawed the rest. Each man sought his post, without more words, lying among the waggon wheels. For half an hour the silence was broken by no sound except a horse's neigh, the snort of oxen but half reassured, and the mutter of comrades watching the veldt. Pitchy darkness settled over the plain, and even Tonda could not see a movement. Suddenly, in the deep stillness, a shot and a cry!—then the rattle of fire-arms, the threatening chorus of the war-song, and the hurtle of assegais made a din infernal. By instinct, rather than sight, West knew that the enemy were concentrating their attack on the weakest point of his defence, an opening through which the cattle had been driven. He ran thither, for the herds kept quiet as yet, standing in a solid mass farthest from the point. He arrived too late. The Basutos, charging in a crowd, had speared every boer at his post, and had stormed the barrier, which they were demolishing. A throng of naked warriors pulled at the ropes and chains and planks, howling the while, and throwing their darts at random, mad with the hope of carnage. Whilst he fired into the black, dim crowd, a spark of light gleamed on the waggon tilts at

either side ; the bearers dropped before his pistols, but others caught up the brand, blew it, and the canvas flamed, ran swiftly up the tilt, and burst in a pyramid of fire as the dry hoops caught. A terrible sight the blaze revealed, teeth gleaming and eyes aflame, feathers tossing, arms waving madly. At that signal the enemy ran up on either side, black shadows that hurried past, all yelling and quivering. Many of the boers, seeing their stronghold forced, slipped out into the veldt ; but enemies rose in their path, and they dropped, screaming.

"Start the cattle !" cried Tonda, running back, picking up fallen assegais as he went. West caught his idea, and followed. At the farther end of the camp they saw the oxen, wild with fright, pressed together, bellowing and steaming and tossing to and fro. A dozen thrusts of the spear, with the Zulu's savage cries, set them off in one body, a solid phalanx against which regiments could not stand. In their thundering course, a dozen boers were trampled into clay. The Kaffirs, wedged in the gate, yelled with terror, and those who could sprang aside ; but the ponderous mass fell upon those remaining. They went down, vanished, slid out of sight, leaving nought human to testify of their existence. Betwixt the burning waggons where had stood three hundred savages, the stream of cattle passed, wet hides gleaming, horns tossed up, black tongues lolling, and eyes staring. Those Kaffirs who had saved themselves ran after, pursued by bullets, and whizzing assegais. They roared as they ran, until all the tumult vanished behind the pall of night. Cries resounded for awhile ; then ceased in the distance.

The boers experienced in Kaffir fights knew the peril over. They sought their dead by the light of the burning waggons. West looked for his Zulu, but did not find him. Next day a patrol reached the spot, announcing help, and presently came Tonda, with blood-stained hands, and loot as much as he could carry. In a few chance words, West learned that his Zulu had satisfied alike his own vengeance and the manes of his comrade. Bela

had paid for robbing a subject of King Panda of his arms—with what awful death no man could tell.

After this affair, the Basuto war ran its course, now historic. Sticking to their cavalry tactics, the Kaffirs were beaten, and lost half their territory to the English, whilst the Free State seized the rest. It is said they are moving again, in alliance with the Gaikas and the Tambookies, but as a nation they have ceased to exist.

This story was published months before the Zulu war was so much as thought of. The news of Isandula reached me at Candahar; it did not surprise me. Before leaving England for Afghanistan, I ventured to predict that the greater war would be in South Africa, if the Russians did not move. I knew what the Zulus are, what our army is, and what kind of man is the average general of the old school. My prophecies of disaster at the Cape were a standing joke of our head-quarter mess. Colonel Colley alone in India shared my misgivings. For he had all my knowledge with a vast deal besides.

NOTES UPON SERVIA.

I.

I HAVE just returned from a trip to Servia. I have had dealings with Servia for a twelvemonth past, and have been obliged to learn something of the country. But in this article there will be neither politics nor polemics. I should have to indite a folio treatise, if I would correct misstatements, ignorantly or knowingly published, about Servia ; and for that task I have no inclination. A friend has asked me to put down some plain and unvarnished facts, just as I observed them ; and that I propose to do. The reader may draw his conclusions. I am going to write now about Paratchin, a spot which, under half a score of different spellings, has been prominent in newspapers of late.

After two days' weary jolt and roll, under tropic glare, all grey with dust, a-creep with fleas, I reached this place from Semendria, on the Danube. During my visit it was the head-quarters of Prince Milan. Gentle slopes encompass it ;—some covered with scanty harvests, others clothed in hazel copse, all wonderfully decked with flowers. In a plain at their foot, burnt with heat, parched with dust, lies Paratchin. Through the midst of it runs the Tchernaya, or Black River, crossed by a wooden bridge. The triumphant flags, planted on each side thereof when Servia went out to glory, were still fluttering erect. The dun, blinding road cuts straight across the plain to this structure, which looks at a distance like the entry of a "tea-gardens" *en fête*.

Urging the tired horses past a desolate meadow, where some primitive tanning is performed in times of peace—past the small shanties and mud cabins, half hid in their orchards—past the more assuming cottage of the postmaster, the wheelwright's shed, and the one stone house of several floors, which was built, apparently, to show what can be done by science—past all these sights, in and out among crowding waggons, carts of wounded soldiers, loafing refugees listlessly staring—one gains the bridge end. Forthwith, from either side, rush vigilant guards, uniformed, shoulder-knotted, baldricked, even moustached, to an exact resemblance of the French gendarme. They demand your papers, all of them, and invite you to enter the hotel whilst M. le Préfet looks them over. Descending, you find yourself in a crowd the most unwashed, the raggedest, the frowsiest, that in your travels has yet been encountered. That I say, ignorant and careless what your travels may have been. They will scarcely outstretch my own; and neither in Asia, Africa, nor America, not in the remotest and most savage districts, have I beheld people so uncleanly as the Servian. Shouldering these brawny teamsters, fugitive peasants, and deserters, a score of officers in blue broadcloth pass up and down the steps leading to the "hotel." The gendarmes have gone that way, after impounding your vehicle.

The front of the hostelry—which of course boasts no upper floor—has two large chambers, one a billiard-room and one a bar. The walls are colourless with smeared filth and damp; once on a time, apparently, a dragon was depicted on them in roughest distemper. The boarded floor is always deep in reeking moisture, the drippings of wine, water, and beer, never wiped since the house began business. In one corner is an open stove, where coffee simmers eternally in a pot caked beyond all shape with smoke and dirt. Through this filthy den one passes to the colonnade bordering two sides of the inn yard. Upon it open the sleeping-rooms, small bare chambers, with a bed and chair for all their furniture. At this time the life of Paratchin con-

centrated under the acacia-trees which occupy a small space of the inn yard, palisaded away from the vulgar. Outside it, horses were tethered, antediluvian vehicles stood in a block; whilst among them squatted refugees, hopeless and helpless, watching hungrily the doings inside. Soldiers, of course, everywhere—sentries, orderlies, deserters—wounded, sick, dying in the streets.

I think there were about thirty special correspondents in Paratchin whilst I stayed there—English, French, Austrian, Hungarian, Russian, German, and Italian. Some were poor devils enough, but others had the lordly air of their profession. It was vastly droll to observe how the crass barbarism of Servian officials ignored that deference which is elsewhere shown to the correspondent of an important paper. M. le Préfet spoke no language but his own, and, to help in his new functions, Government had given him a Belgrade professor who spoke French.

Neither of these gentlemen, apparently, so much as recognized the *Times* by name, when its representative made himself known to them. As a consequence, they drew no invidious distinctions, treating with a like kindly scorn the correspondent who would be a guide for millions, and him who had come out on spec for a village sheet of Hungary. All were obliged to submit their despatches to the professor, for whose convenience they must be written in French. The professor held his *levée*—under the acacias, of course—in a brief interval between breakfast and cards. Upon him the “specials” waited, carrying each his pen, his ink, and his despatch. The professor, seated like an emperor, bowed, smiled, read the telegram thoughtfully, crossed out what did not please him, introduced his own ideas, corrected the grammar, or discussed courteously a point of style, and returned the blotted form for re-copying. Droller yet it was to see the fuming astonishment of certain journalists—used, as they declare, to be *flattered* by kings and courted by field-marshal—under this tutelage of a Belgrade school-master. Needless to say, that the silly system defeated its own ends; for correspondents gave up the Parat-

chin telegraph, while every post carried down their despatches for transmission *vid* Semlin. It was said that Austria took 1000*l.* a month, which would have been mighty useful in the Servian treasury. But the same Oriental legislation pervades all things. Imitating a great people circumstanced very differently, Servia announced that no telegram should leave her borders without the official visa, and stoically beheld 1000*l.* a month cross the Danube, under her very nose, without thought of rescinding the edict.

Paratchin consists of one long street—that in which stands the bridge—and a cross lane bordering the river. In each of them are small, reeking booths, open to the street, under a wooden colonnade. The best shop is a chemist's, which would pass as decent in an English hamlet. The linendraper's, the ironmonger's, could not be paralleled for dirt and insignificance between the Grampians and the Channel; there may be something like them in very remote villages of Ireland.

Nothing in Servia which requires skill or industry for its manufacture is home-made. The Turk supplies all beautiful wares, and the Austrian or the Englishman all things for use. Your Serb, who talks so loud of civilization and improvement, neither wears nor employs one article of his own making. His clothes are foreign—barring the home-spun shirt—his tools and weapons foreign. He is nothing but an agriculturist of the most primitive order. His shops, therefore, contain the rudest wares, and nothing to tempt the visitor. We have heard a very great deal of outrages against property, of villages burnt, and so on: I feel quite sure that the utmost violence could do against Paratchin—which is, after all, an important "town" of Servia—would not cause a loss of goods (saving the houses) to the sum of 1000*l.*

Paratchin once resolved to build a church, and set the lines of it on a scale of extraordinary magnificence. It would have accommodated many of the people, but also their flocks and

herds. Unfortunately, the roof fell in before the walls were finished, and there was an end of that public improvement. Pending further advice, the ruin is utilized as a grand guard, and its cleared space about makes an exercise-ground for dancing kolo. Thither the stalwart youth resort to practise bear-like antics which they call national. Disgusted with the failure of its ambitious hope, Paratchin has raised a church as much too small as its first design was too large. Hard by, stands the prince's residence—a neat cottage, lying back from the road, with a weedy wilderness before it.

Circumstances make a people. That is an axiom of the new philosophy, and we may so far admit its truth as to confess that circumstances have made the people of Paratchin interesting. A lot of circumstances were needed; for the one point of character which lifts them above commonplace is their astounding stolidity—in fact, their excess of commonplace. To feel the due depth of horror which should be excited by “Bulgarian atrocities,” it is essential that a man should not have visited these countries, should not have talked with refugees, and should not have passed weary hours in a place like Paratchin. If the victims care so very little, how shall the spectator wax over-wroth?

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war, or because they follow the rule so carefully set them by their enemies at the beginning. But a farmhouse standing alone seems to be moderately safe.

Here is a story from Cupria by Knjazevac: Cupria means bridge, and every place which owns a bridge is so called, without qualification. N.B. There are no stone or iron structures of the sort in Servia.

First a word of the hero and heroines of my tale. I was standing at the door of the hotel with an official of the department wherein my business lay. Two women, listlessly struggling through the perennial crowd, caught sight of us, and came to beg. They looked like Esquimaux or Laps, swaddled in filthy blanket cloth, their legs heavily gaitered, though their feet were bare. Of such like are all these poor people—saving the Greeks and Romans—their harsh features and clumsy frames made downright hideous by the national dress. One can scarcely recognize age in their women betwixt sixteen and sixty. Those who addressed me may have been twenty years old, or forty, maidens or mothers. The blazing summer and the long cruel winter tell most heavily on the female population, who are always exposed to it. These creatures had with them a little boy, dressed only in a shirt.

The gentleman with me, a Servian, of course, addressed them in French as "*Gueux de Bulgares*," "*Voleuses*," "*Vauriens*," and other such epithets with which these Crusaders welcome refugees. The women did not understand his language; but the tones of abuse need no translation. I gave them a few paras, received without thanks, and they went away. Calling my dragoon or talmash, as is the Servian name, I followed. They loitered slowly by the river side, stopping often to confer with other families in like case, watching a sale of pigs or poultry, staring at the soldiers, at the children bathing—at any small sight that passed. Meeting no other foreigners, they did not try to beg. I followed them past the Prince's quarters, past the church, along the broad track that leads towards Banja. Where the

cottages and the orchards end, there is plenty of waste ground, occupied of late by an encampment of Bulgarian fugitives. For many hundred yards about, their sheep and bullocks were grazing, under charge of ragged girls scarce higher than the bristling weeds.

The waggons stood in a loose triangle. To one of them we made our devious way. Crowds of men and women hung about, cooking in the shadow of their vehicles. It was hot enough almost to roast an egg upon the stones. In the waggon which we approached, all the household furniture had been removed—the mattresses, and chests of clothing, and utensils of the farm and kitchen. No more does the Bulgarian boast, as a rule—he seldom has a chair or a table. A gigantic old man had just returned with fuel; a girl, whose hair alone displayed her youth, was replenishing the fire. The women drew near, seated themselves cross-legged on the ground, and began to talk drowsily. From a neighbouring fire some gossip would call to them, and receive a spiritless answer. The old man climbed into his cart, laid himself on a frowsy mattress, and prepared to sleep till breakfast should be ready.

I left the road and approached, exciting a dull curiosity amongst the neighbours. My “*Fallaboga dobrah, gospodin?*” to the old man, was duly returned with “*Dobravinci, gospodin!*” He rose in astonishment and alarm, expecting some persecution, I fear. But my dragoman set all at ease, and a present of real Turkish tobacco convinced them of good-will. Without any difficulty, the father told me his adventures. “I lived at Cupria by Knjazevac,” he said, “and I am a Servian born. My father bought Turkish lands there after the great war. Many Bulgars came into the country then, and so we have kept our dress and language. We are not foreigners. My farm was about a mile from Cupria, and eight miles from Knjazevac. Before the war I had six pairs of beautiful oxen—”

“Ay, ay!” wailed the women.

"Ten goats, and sixteen sheep—"

"Ay, ay!"

"Two ponies—"

"Ay, ay!"

"A hundred and one pigs—"

"Ay, ay, ay!"

"The pigs were killed, all that didn't escape—"

"Ay, ay, ay, aï—aï—aïh!"

"My sheep and goats and five pairs of oxen have been stolen—"

Here the wailing became a chant.

"I must sell my ponies, to get food; and the merciful One knows how we shall live when they are gone."

"How was it," I asked, "that you did not get away in time? Most of your countrymen saved all their movable property."

"Those who lived in the villages had warning, but we knew very little of the danger until it was too late. I thought there was still time to get in the harvest, and we were cutting it in a field, when the Tcherkess (Circassians) galloped past. They fired at us, but went on. We ran home, and got our cart loaded. My wife and daughters set off, whilst I tried to collect the pigs. I had driven most of them into the yard, the boys helping me, when a regiment of Turks came out of the wood, and marched straight towards us. We couldn't run, for there were hundreds of Tcherkess scouring about. In ten minutes the cottage was full of soldiers. The first thing they did was to shoot all the pigs and dogs; then they asked me for food, and they ate everything. When there was nothing left, they went to sleep for an hour, and set off towards Knjazevac."

"But you were not ill-treated?"

"No. An officer struck me because I had touched him in passing, and a dervish with them said I ought to be shot like the pigs. But they only called me names—" He muttered some-

thing else, which meant, I feel sure, that Servians did as much. "As soon as they were gone," the old man continued, "I went after my wife, and caught her up. So we came through Banja here. Do you know where the Turks are, gospodin?"

"They have not passed Banja," I said. "Didn't you hear firing before the enemy came upon you?"

"Oh, firing enough!" he answered. "But we had heard it for weeks, and we never thought the Turks could get through our lines. We thought the Serbs would fight," he added significantly, in lower tones.

"We are robbed of everything!" the wife cried. "The Turk has shot our dear pigs, and the Serb has stolen our oxen, our sheep, and our beautiful goats. And so we're like to starve, gospodin!"

"Hush, hush!" whispered the husband.

"We did take warning in time, and we sent away our oxen, and sheep, and goats by Chole Andreiovitch"—or a name like that—"and he has burnt out the brand! There are a hundred honest Bulgars in Paratchin who will swear to our beasts, but the Serbs won't listen to us; they call us thieves—ay, ay, ay!"

That's the sort of story I heard day by day from the refugees—seldom a charge of personal violence against the Turk, and never a hint of revenge. These victims are resigned to a degree more Christian-like than manly. What indignation they are capable of feeling—and it may, perhaps, be more than shows—is directed all against the Serb. Not without reason; for these people, by their intrigues, their blatant boasting, and reckless silliness, have brought upon the refugees their ruin; and, having ruined, they pursue towards them no course more humane or politic than reviling and starvation. Neither public nor private charity seek to relieve their needs. The disused counters in a lost game, they are thrown aside, and only seen to be cursed.

But a sort of ugly justice obliges me to admit that Servia shows

no more kindness to her wounded sons than to the stranger. She does not insult them—that is all the difference. I have seen other wars—some more barbarous in certain respects. I have seen savages taunt their wounded and beaten comrades, but I never saw a people treat them with indifference. I never saw women step across a poor fellow's body to enter their own doors, and ask him no question, offer him no aid. That is what was reserved to me in Paratchin and elsewhere.

The wounded came in trains unending, stretched upon hay, after fifty miles' journey on a springless bullock-cart. What those hapless wretches had suffered no one shall tell. Arriving at this, a great hospital station, not ten per cent. could be accommodated in the wards. A huge proportion might not approach the hospital street—that cross-lane I have mentioned. They were lifted out—hay and all—and laid upon the pavement, where at evening time the women sat knitting and spinning. Not one so much as gave a glass of water in my sight. Not one asked to help in the hospitals or the horrible cook-house, where vile messes were concocted—that is, vile according to our notions, but such, perhaps, as Servian peasants love when strong. How is this cruel carelessness to be explained? The people do not seem unkind. Without being demonstrative, they show a simple and courteous good-will towards the stranger. I heard an English correspondent refer the want of feeling, which we all noticed, to the effect of peasant-proprietorship. He said that the earth-hunger, when systematically encouraged, as here, naturally brings with it such selfishness. The commune is everything to these small land-owners. A man from the next district, or village, or parish, is a foreigner. Absorbed in his own petty interests, the peasant freeholder does not recognize that abstraction called the State, and admits no duty towards his fellows beyond the boundary. This may be so. The theory is intelligible, at least; but I am only telling what I saw, and that was a portent.

Whilst on this subject, I may mention another Servian fact

which probably hangs to the same system of peasant freeholds. No one owns a stake of 10,000*l.* in the country. Many there are worth so much, a few really wealthy, and one of colossal fortune. But so soon as a Serb owns money to invest, he sends it elsewhere. He buys land in Austria, in Roumania, Wallachia, or the Russian provinces—never in his own country. The reason stated is that Servian peasants won't work for a master, and also that the want of roads and depôts would make large farming impossible. That is all true enough. I met an English-speaking man at Jagodina, who prosperously managed a small steam flour-mill. He was in search of 5000*l.* more capital; 1000*l.* to enlarge his machinery, and 4000*l.* to make roads for feeding it. His operations at present are confined in a valley, five miles across, from which there is no practicable outlet.

Whatever the secret of capitalists' disinclination to stake money in their native land, it has an effect to be regretted. For where a man's treasure is, there will his heart be also; and those who should be the leading councillors of Serbia are apt to feel more special interest in the politics of Roumania or Hungary. By their withdrawal government falls a prey to professional politicians—men who rise from nothing, who have no visible means of livelihood besides a superb stock of sentiments, and who accumulate a fortune out of the pittance assigned to ministers. Nor is this all the country's loss, for there is not in Serbia a nobleman, nor one of that class which we should call the "country gentleman." Since the rich place their interests outside, no one remains for the peasantry to look up to or consult. The priest is one of themselves—not better educated, nor more experienced. The candidates for Skopchina or Parliament are the same professional statesmen who have no local interest to fear.

Servia is a dead level, politically; and it obeys—as helpless mediocrity always will. The game of government is no better than a game at cards, where a numerous gallery stands waiting to "cut in." When a player has had his fling, he is expected to

retire awhile, and let others enjoy their chance. Some years since, the wife of the English Consul heard that a most improbable person had been made minister. "Why, what next?" she exclaimed. "They will give"—seeking the most grotesque individual of her acquaintance—"they will give Asterics a portfolio soon." Returning from England six months after, she found Asterics installed at the Home Office. His turn had come.

But I return to Paratchin—not bodily, the gods forbend!—but in spirit. Like most peoples semi-civilized, the Servians keep irregular habits, always ready to sleep during the day or to sit up all night. However terrible the news, it did not disturb their card-parties at Paratchin. Sometimes the spirit of national harmony seized on them, with awful results. The professor's great accomplishment, besides French grammar, was singing. He possessed, apparently, as many songs as Solomon, but all set to one tune, so far as I could perceive. The elements of Servian music are simple; a dog could master them, and, in fact, he generally shows himself quite proficient by mere instinct. I know a terrier which chants most beautifully, in pure Serb, when the moon is high. You would vow, to watch him, that he had taken lessons of the professor. In no other attitude does that eminent musician hold forth—barring anatomical differences betwixt man and dog. He leans well back upon his chair—front-tilted—throws forward his chin towards heaven, closes his eyes, and, in point of fact, he howls. Nobody throws anything at him. The surrounding audience sits entranced, and murmurs admiration at a louder whoop than common. How unjust is man towards the lower animals! For making just such a noise, my dog has been threatened with the penalties of the law.

I would rather speak gravely of Servian music, because I am told that those who have read—not heard—the songs, declare them interesting. No doubt they are so historically; but the Turkish scale—most barbarous of all used westward of China—has left an awful mark upon them. We were many foreigners in

Paratchin, as I have said, and several had paid attention to musical science. Not one could distinguish between a comic song and a dirge!—each alike consisting of howling. But the natives were much affected by what seemed to us monotony. They laughed, they fired up, and they saddened at the singer's will. Music has on them an evident power. I do not know the customs of the Greek Church so well as to say whether the religious chants used in Servia are very old, or whether they are native to the soil. They may have come from Byzantium or Moscow, but there is a very striking difference when they are compared with profane harmony. Just as the songs profane are all dirge-like and wearisome, so the religious chants are lively, quick, and, to our ears, humorous. Many of them would certainly earn favour at our music-halls. There's a happy, easy lilt in the responses which would go to admiration with a chorus, and the officiating priest, if one shuts one's eyes, might well be "obliging with a patter song." Of such kind possibly was the old Servian music, before the Turk came down upon this land, and created for us that unfathomable Eastern question.

Russians passed through in plenty during my stay at Paratchin. Before it ended, indeed, they arrived by scores at a time. Very rough fellows were some, looking like mechanics in their working clothes. Repute made them all officers, but I am very certain that great part were vagabond privates. The real officers were quite another sort of man, generally speaking very gentlemanly and obliging, and excellent linguists. A large number spoke English, and those who did so spoke it well. Nearly all, I think, understood a little, but preferred to appear ignorant rather than talk badly. The extremest politeness ruled between them and the Servians, but it was easy to observe that they did not like each other.

The Russians talked freely of Servian cowardice. One of them recited to me the tale of Kirayeff's death in loud tones—excused by his friendship for the man, but highly injudicious under the

acacia-trees at Paratchin. He described how the Servians called on their commander to lead them with the bayonet ; how, against his better judgment, he did so ; and how the battalion turned, like one man, and fled before two hundred Tcherkess. Kirayeff, disdaining to fly, was cut down where he stood. Several officers present at the table understood French, but they uttered no word. At the front, and in the general's presence, there were many scenes of jealousy and insubordination. I may mention one of them, which had a tragic finish. A Russian captain, Michaeloff I think by name, had command of a regiment. He was ordered by Tchernayeff to execute some movement, and he failed to do so ; for indiscipline is not confined to Servian officers. The general reprimanded him before the staff, but accepted his explanation, whatever it may have been. Some of those present smiled, in a manner to suggest doubts of the Russian's courage. Then and there he snatched a revolver from his belt, and challenged a Servian colonel to fight.

For this offence General Tchernayeff ordered him to Belgrade, there to report himself at the War Office. Michaeloff was known as a reckless dare-devil, and on that account a gendarme accompanied him, to see that he fulfilled instructions. Arriving at Paratchin, he descended for breakfast. A new gendarme was given him on leaving, and this man pushed himself before Michaeloff to enter the waggon. A squabble ensued, and the prefect hurried out to settle it. Words passed between the civil and military officers, and the former struck the latter. Michaeloff said not a word, but stolidly took his place and started. At Cupria, the next station, he got out his luggage, dressed himself in Russian uniform, and carefully put on all his decorations—thirteen in number. "Now," said he to the gendarme, "I am a Russ again, and I remember that I have been struck. Turn the cart round. I am going to kill the prefect !" The gendarme objected, and, being rather drunk, he sent a comrade for cords to bind the prisoner. At sight of them Michaeloff drew his revolver,

and fired two balls into the gendarme's body. He fell, badly wounded, but from the ground lodged three bullets in the Russian's chest. Michaeloff was not dead, however, when I passed through Cupria some days afterwards. This story offers several points worth meditating. I tell it to show that the friendship is rather *tendu* between Russ and Serb.

NOTES UPON SERVIA.

II.

ONE who desires to impart the knowledge with which his own mind may be overflowing, often finds that he has wasted time and trouble in conscientious description of something which his readers do not care about. It may seem to him, and probably may be, a something vastly important ; but if the public do not "see it," his most lucid explanations will be thrown away. Mindful of this truth, I have carefully inquired what my friends wish to know about Servia, putting them as typical representatives of the public, and I discover that nine in ten feel a curious anxiety for information about Belgrade. They say that the correspondents have not thoroughly set before their eyes the Servian capital ; that they do not feel at home in it ; that it may resemble Paris, or Constantinople, or a Kaffir kraal, for anything definite that has been conveyed to their understanding.

I comprehend this, whilst sympathizing with the gentlemen who are expected to "make a picture" out of every scene they behold. The Jew in Egypt had no harder task than falls to him who must find picturesque copy at Belgrade. The Servian capital lends him not a straw. Unless he go through it street by street—a dreary periphus—he will find nothing to describe. I learn that correspondents have "done" what could be done—the konak or palace, the university, and the theatre ; all else in Belgrade is

ruins or intentions. There was once, so old residents tell, a picturesque town of the Oriental class—shady gardens, a bazaar, a college of dervishes, and so on. At this present time the site of the gardens is a boulevard inchoate, the bazaar has vanished utterly, the Turkish quarter has been pierced by a Christian street. This improvement is very well in theory. Belgrade, people say, has vindicated its European character; but the boulevard is not fifty yards in length, the Christian street is only saved from destruction of floods by those stout old Turkish walls, which the *démolisseurs* were too lazy to remove. There is not a shop which could be described as other than a stall.

To walk through Belgrade with observant eyes, is to take a practical lesson in ethnology. The palace of the prince—grandson of a pig-driver—is a decent mansion, full of second-rate French furniture; full to such a point that you see the things are valued as curiosities rather than for use. The theatre stands on the site of the bazaar, in a barren waste of weeds and potsherds. No scenic establishment at London compares with it for outside show; and I know the Servian character too well to doubt that its arrangements within are admirable, for theatrical machinery can be had for payment, and, starve who will in Servia, appearances are kept up. A drama, a company, and an audience are alone wanting to give Belgrade a successful rival to Drury Lane. There is, also, the university, which looks upon another weed-grown square, once the Turkish cemetery. It was presented to the state by a wealthy pork merchant, and lacks only pupils and professors to rank with historic institutions of the sort. In the waste of grass and sprouting shrubs outside you may trace the outline of brick-built tombs, levelled long ago. Facing that silent sister of universities is the police office, a conscientious imitation, so far as system goes, of the grand Slavonic model at St. Petersburg. Beyond these buildings, nothing! Tumbling houses, mouldy walls, helpless people, smells, and holes, make Belgrade. In the barbarous English of newspapers, the town has been declared to

mark a "transition." If it be so, indeed, the transition is from bad to worse, by all seeming.

The Turk said little and did nothing; the Serb talks a great deal, but arrives at the same nullity in fulfilment. Immensely amused I have been with the innocence of people here who point to fine rules as if they were synonymous with honest practice, and to advanced legislation as though it carried execution with it. Why, reverend sir, or philanthropic madam, this admirable legislation, these grand phrases (translated, most of them), were designed for no other purpose than that they now serve—deception. There was never thought of using them. Regard the school-system, for instance. It makes Britannia blush to read it. What! she exclaims; a people like the Servian—but just emancipated, poor, ignorant, and struggling—they can establish a free school in every commune, a high school for the arrondissement, a central university, and travelling scholarships? What then should England do? That question I shall not seek to answer; but I hope she will never legislate, as do the Serbs, for show, with no idea of carrying out their laws. In view of the crisis that has now arisen, that school-system was decreed, for a paper proof that Servia stands amongst the foremost in comprehension of those duties which modern feeling demands.

The theatre, as I have said, does not support a company of actors; it depends upon strolling visitors from beyond the Danube. Sometimes a "star" will shoot from Pesth or Vienna; but unless he belong to the lowest school of art, he will not draw; for the Serbs understand no drama except the roaring clap-trap. Battles they must have, and smoke, and lots of gore, as real as it may be given them. The star engages colleagues in Hungary "for the run," and when that is finished the theatre falls into solitude again. There is no other amusement. Outside the town is a beer garden, in which a band from Austrian Semlin occasionally delights the visitors; nothing else to divert or interest from Dan to Beersheba. Private parties are very few, and balls are only given

by the consuls. Much heart-burning they cause also, for everybody knows everybody, and every one has an equal claim to be invited. There is not a family in Servia that ever claims precedence over any other, saving that of the elected prince. A patent of nobility is taken out by opening a shop, and a signboard serves the purpose of a scutcheon.

Only one word of politics before I enter upon matters more interesting. Very often has Lord Beaconsfield provoked the merriment of his adversaries, justly or otherwise. I have seen in print some sneers at his credulity for attaching importance to the secret societies over yonder. Amongst all cases of wild ignorance which have made me laugh at the presumption of those who undertake to teach us, this is perhaps the grossest. Not a Servian child but knows that the Omladina made this war, and that Mr. Rictic—a name commonly spelt Ristics, and to be pronounced Richtich—is a vice-president of the society. The plans and doings of this association, and of others like it, are the very first points to master in gaining a knowledge of the Oriental question.

The Omladina is a very serious fact, indeed. Too happy would be the Emperors of Russia and Austria if they could afford to join the laugh at Lord Beaconsfield's hint. It is in truth the skeleton that occupies their imperial cupboard, their unseen master, who has decreed the end of both of them, whom they dare neither disobey nor follow. Every Russian officer or private who joined the Servians, until lately, was a member thereof. The luckless Czar had two motives for letting him go. In the first place, he dared not refuse; and, in the second, he hoped the volunteer would fall. Without a comprehension of the Omladina conspiracy—the Russian branch of which is called the Panslavic Committee—the proceedings of Austria and Russia become an unintelligible maze. Its objects are to reunite the scattered families of Sclavonia, now divided between Russia, Austria, and Turkey. Its politics are necessarily republican and socialistic. As yet it gives itself small trouble about Czar or Kaiser, as

an institution, desiring to use them for the furtherance of its aims.

But Czar and Kaiser are doomed. Sooner or later—and events pass quick in this nineteenth century—the Omladina and its allied societies will have done with monarchs, either because they have too well served their ends, or because they are seen to be obstructions. This war has given the conspiracy a monstrous help. It stands master of an army in the field. It has made a prince, and it sees how to dethrone a hostile emperor. Tchernaijeff has always been a pillar of the association. The Servians were too ignorant to join it as a people, spite of their schools; but they understand now, and the government is at its wits' end with alarm. Mr. Rictic looks with blank eye at the phantom he has raised. He is not a clever man, the Serb prime minister; large of frame, white, flaccid, and phlegmatic, he overpowers those who come within his influence by cold and steady pressure. A man who had raised himself to such estate from the barber's shop—and the Servian barber's, remember—might well fancy his intellect a match for greater spirits than lead the Omladina. But he has now found his mistake.

Enough of politics, however. We shall see what we shall see; and if that be the dissolution of the "sick woman," Austria, or of the Moscovite giant, it is not England which could prevent it. I wish to write of Servia as a country to travel in. From this point of view I cannot recommend it, except to the angler. There are no fish in Europe so large and so fine-flavoured as those of the Danube; the best of all, unfortunately, is not to be caught by any tackle yet invented. The sterlet, called here the sterl, has no teeth, nor even a jaw; his mouth is a sucking-apparatus, and his only bone is a soft spinal cord. For our Russian friends it was the most delightful of surprises to find in this part of Barbarie, at the modest price of twopence, a fish which they pay ten roubles for at St. Petersburg.¹ The sterlet, indeed,

¹ Sterlets have been much less costly in St. Petersburg since the war. Even at

makes a delicious dish, but one of which a man soon tires. When I first ate it, at Semendria, I thought that of such meat must be compounded the ambrosia of the gods, but at this moment my gorge rises with the thought.

There are other fish, however, in the Danube, all more delicious than their like elsewhere. The *dik* is a fine fellow, and gives excellent sport; he resembles a tench, but his jaws are armed with teeth like needles; he runs to an enormous size, as does the Danube perch. I have noticed also a fish like the Cape barba—our homely miller's thumb magnified and beautified. The largest of these which I saw might have weighed six to eight pounds, but they run bigger. Our native pike becomes a giant in the Danube, where they catch him with raw meat upon a butcher's hook, as a man fishes for sharks. Besides these, trout are often found in the mountain streams, and in some places, where monks have built them pools to fatten in, they grow to 2 lb. weight and more. Loaches of extraordinary size and extreme beauty of marking are caught in the smaller rivers. At Paratchin, for instance, I have bought a dish, taken with the casting-net, which contained loaches of 8 in. or more in length, mottled and marbled like the most graceful snakes. Gudgeons are found everywhere.

In the days of Turkish supremacy there was a guild of fishermen, who understood their business, and kept the riverain towns supplied. All that is finished and done. Loafers now go out with nets which they hire, take what Heaven sends them, and live upon the proceeds. If no better means of livelihood turn up before starvation point, they repeat the operation. There exists no longer a class of men who understand fishing as a sport, nor who pursue it for a regular business. Hence it results that there is no convenience or comfort for an angler, upon the Servian side, at least. Facing Belgrade, at Semlin, I believe that his pursuits would be less unintelligible; but St. Chrysostom himself,

Dussaud's I paid only three roubles at the beginning of 1878; and the privilege of catching them with a hand-net in a marble fountain was "thrown in."

the golden-mouthed, would not persuade a Serb that fishing can be other than a despicable occupation. He will fish, if necessary ; but he would rather beg, supposing foreigners visited him in such numbers as to make it worth while.

Things being so, it will be understood that his tackle is primitive, and his methods such as one need not describe. They generally consist of a strike-net. An enthusiastic angler who had come to see the war hired a canoe one day for trolling. For awhile the Serb boatmen watched his operations with grave contempt, then silently lifted their anchor and returned. Vain to ask an explanation ; they would not argue with a man so lost to sense and decency. My friend protested, but they paddled in ; the Serb has not yet learned to use a keel or oar or rudder. Though they had been absent only an hour, these ruffians demanded the whole sum agreed for half a day, and I am sorry to say that they got it. W—— took out a little change in strong expressions, which drew upon him the muttered threat, "We shall meet in the dark." This is a formula with Serbs ; a cowardly threat of assassination, but too serious in many cases.

One would have expected this to be a great game country. Its fine forests, hills untrodden, and valleys scarcely peopled, should be full of boar and deer. Natives will tell you that its promise is fulfilled, but so they would tell you that Belgrade is paved with diamonds, if they felt sure you knew no better. An English gentleman, who has lived thirty years in Servia, tells me that the wild boar is scarcely found. In the many battues arranged by Princes Milosch and Michel—sportsmen both—he never saw one ; but several times, whilst fulfilling his duty as Queen's messenger, he has met a wild pig on the forest path.

What a life was that of Captain Heneage, before economy combined with common sense to insist that our despatches should go down the Danube ! Twice every month he rode post with a Tatar, from Belgrade to Constantinople, five days and nights. Not a highway did he strike ; the only road was a horse-track,

crossing hills and rivers and forests, never made at the beginning, and untouched from year to year. When the holes and the sloughs became actually impassable—that is, when a man risked his life in the essay—some enterprising packman turned aside and cut a virgin bye-path. Conceive the pleasure of travelling post haste, under these circumstances! The messenger slept in his saddle, in the straw whilst his horse was changed, anywhere. Man can adapt himself to almost any hardships, but the Belgrade station was regarded with dismay by that very unparticular set of gentlemen, her Majesty's couriers. The average time that they held it was three years. Captain Heneage did the work in old-fashioned style for seven, and was never more fit, he says, than when the change of route took place: There are few points on which I can justly give the Servians honour, but their roads—there are only three or four—are as good as circumstances will allow. Wheeled vehicles can be used near all the villages in fine weather, and the main highway, from north to south, is very seldom stopped even in winter.

I did my best with Captain Heneage, to persuade him into writing down some of those hunting stories which his memory recalled from time to time. Should he care to do so, his readers will obtain a course of practical instruction in the field-sports to be pursued in Servia. Though wild boars and deer are uncommon, there is roebuck in fair plenty; bears, too, haunt the dense forests, skins of marten are a regular source of trade; but the wolf is most prominent of all feræ in that country. There, as in some parts of Russia, he is positively dangerous to man. The wolf often figures in Serb story and song, acting the part of an avenger; the felon knight, the Moslem ravisher, the wicked dame, come to ignominious catastrophe under his fangs. Unluckily, the brute does not discriminate in real life, generally seizing the innocent, whilst the strong and the guilty go free. In summer he keeps quiet enough among the woods and mountains; but when begins the awful Servian winter, he collects in packs, to harry the roads and outskirts of the villages.

The honourable company of Queen's messengers keeps many a tale of adventure with wolves. They had the right, not seldom exercised, of demanding an escort from the villages in such a case ; but the auditors of the Foreign Office looked rather closely at these extra charges, and it became a rule, grimly comic, that no escort would be "passed" unless on affidavit that the wolves' howling had been heard, or their grey noses seen. Legend tells that an Irish messenger, whose accounts had not gone through without reduction, waited on the chief secretary. "Sor," said he, "before I condescended to call out the dirty scum—the escort—I waited to see them devils all jumping at me saddle bow like fleas. It wasn't for the saving of me poor life, but for the sake of your own feelings at the thought how an Irish gentleman was being ate aloive by half-bred dogs, whilst you, sor, were sitten in your own armchair and slippers!"—warming at the idea, he continued, "with your glass of hot toddy, sor, and your lady wife working her sampler opposite, an' smoiling at you, and"—the secretary, overpowered, hastily put his initials to the bill.

For all the information about Servia which the war spread among our public, there is still an ignorance beyond belief. The country has its interested upholders, just like bigger states, and these do their best to cloud the ugly truth behind philanthropic clap-trap. I do not suppose any one so ill-informed by this time as to think of travelling there in winter ; that would be mad, if not impossible. But it is likely that there are a number of tourists anxious to behold the spots so often talked of in the war. For those who are strong, quite careless where they sleep or what they eat, the trip may be interesting. Servia is a land most charming for scenery. To call it, as some do, the Eastern Switzerland, is a silly exaggeration. Neither the Alps nor the lakes are there ; but some of its mountain passes have a gloomy grandeur very striking, and it shows only too much of that loneliness in which Switzerland is wanting at this time. Also to be noticed is a quaintness of landscape in certain parts, such as I have nowhere else observed.

You pass superb scenery dwarfed to a very modest size, if heights and depths be measured. I remember very well a Matterhorn in miniature which amused me in the Morava valley. Scarce 2000 feet in height, and cultivated from top to bottom, it had all the presumption of a first-class peak. The pine-wood on its little crest seemed tumbling on one's head, the descending bullocks were foreshortened so that their hinder parts went out of sight. The mellow corn on that slope is an abiding marvel. One would expect to see vines and harvests, feeding flocks, and groves of trees wash headlong downwards at the first fall of rain. If they fell, they would ruin a lovely carpet; for the comflocan and the scabious, the Canterbury-bell and the wild monkshood, make an exquisite pattern of varied blues beneath the peak, with tall mouse-ear and camomile for yellow, and a score of little weeds to help the pattern out. Red is lacking, and I remember to have wondered how soon scarlet fezes and crimson blood would supply that missing colour in the sweet design.

Those pretty weeds turned to dry sticks and tassels, and the red harvest did not come. I should have mourned it with greater sincerity perhaps than some who talk flatulent nonsense about the Serb. My charges are made against those who mislead, misgovern, and misuse a race of men very simple and honest. If one can make one's mind up to regard the Servian as a being scarce half-civilized, one perceives that he has virtues. It depends upon the point of view. Class him with Englishmen or Frenchmen, and he becomes offensively absurd; but in his own semi-savage line he is not an unpleasant specimen. An undeserved misfortune it is that reckless politicians, educated in bad schools abroad, and most injudicious friends, will not take him for what he is. For their own objects they parade him in a shape which he himself would be first to condemn if he knew what his rulers were doing. Common sense is not lacking in the country, nor at the capital, indeed. Those who guided Servia in her desperate course were very well aware of the falsehoods they were telling.

But they found their profit therein, as will be seen hereafter, let the war end as it will.

So far as the people go, this country should be very pleasant for travel—barring dirt incredible. The cheapness of things is beyond belief, and one feels amazed that Austrian dealers, if not French and English, have so long neglected the Servian supply. Three-halfpence per pair for fowls is thought no less than robbery at Belgrade itself. My coachman bought two fat geese at two-pence-halfpenny and threepence by Jakodina, and did not cease to grumble at the charge for a whole day afterwards. Everything native runs in proportion ; the pity is that there are so few native things. It should be easy to transport these fowls and ducks and geese and pigs to Paris, or even to England, with a monstrous profit. After all, Belgrade is but four days from home. The loss by death should be small, for Servian poultry, though fat, are hardy. An active man who engaged in the speculation might well hope to gain some thousands per cent. of profit.

The government has built meanas, or inns, along the main road, but a traveller must not rely on them. He will find nothing there but the soup of sour milk, and the roast fowl or goose which one learns to hate with sick disgust in Servia. As to his bedroom—which is also his *salle à manger*—it will be alive with awful vermin. In a preceding article I have told what a meana of the highest class is like ; and it may be said that from the quality of Paratchin they go in horrible descent to depths beyond all sounding. Wine and slibovitz—plum brandy—are the drink supplied, of which I shall only declare that the astounding cheapness is equalled by the nastiness. I have drunk good native wine in Servia at 6 fr., or dinars, the bottle, but only once.

It may be concluded from these remarks that I do not exactly recommend a holiday trip to the late scene of war—that, indeed, was what I meant to convey.

A CRIME IN THE WOODS.

AT the north-eastern corner of Nicaragua dwells a small population of gold-diggers, French for the most part. Libertad is the headquarters of the colony. Hundreds of miles beyond civilization, even such as rules in Nicaragua, the miners dwell about this spot, in thick woods, by lonely streams. From time to time they rendezvous in Libertad, to hold a week's jollity. Barbachella was the recognized chief of the crew in my time. He travelled with us a good deal, and, on leaving, we gave him a reckless invitation to "come and stop," if ever he should visit England. Striking a lucky vein some months after, he allowed himself a trip to his home in Alsace, and called on us in passing. Dwells it not in the legends of the Naval and Military Club how he arrived at lunch-time, and presented to the porter the address we had given him, written on a dirty playing-card?—a hirsute monster, clad in bottle-green tunic, with unnecessary buttons of unusual magnificence, knee-boots that creaked, and Panama hat? Jack and I were lunching when thus invaded. We were young, and we quailed before that apparition. As for Jack, he fairly disappeared; whilst I, in the despair of fright, assumed a boisterous tone, spoke of game and Indians, and loaded my conversation with all the Spanish I could drag in. The poor old fellow saw his mistake—or ours—talked awhile awkwardly, his honest face all red, and left us, not without dignity. He never penetrated beyond the hall. I returned to lunch, conscience-



stricken, but sustained by a sense of magnanimity superior, at least, to Jack's. He was ashamed, and said so nobly; but he added, with some force, that I would not have shown this moral courage in my own club. The repartee was crushing. In an awful picture I saw the hall of my own sanctuary invaded thus; I saw De Mogyns gazing at the visitant with no speculation in his stony eyes; I heard the rough broken English, which our hall-porter superciliously pretends to misunderstand; I heard the chaff in the smoking-room—and I was silenced.

But later years have taught me that honesty and kindliness are not so common that he who possesses them should be lightly held. Therefore, on meeting Barbachella in the Strand the other day, I rejoiced to have an opportunity of making amends for boyish rudeness. I welcomed him as he deserves to be welcomed, and took his arm. Let it not be counted to my disparagement if I frankly mention that he wore clothes this time remotely like the attire favoured by Europe three or four years ago. Barbachella's famous beard had thinned—it hung to his waist in sandy grizzle—but the grave, bony face could not be mistaken, and the wrinkled eyes of German blue were frank and responsive to a jest as ever. Be sure I took the good old fellow to my club this time, and made him happy. Amongst many things droll, and some affecting, which composed his budget of news from Libertad, he gave me the story that follows. I have "touched" it, of course, probably without adorning.

"You remember Barbier, un coquin, va? Small as an imp, and wicked as the great devil—but wicked, we thought, like a good fellow. Was it while you stayed that he had the row with Monseigneur le Nigger, notre cher préfet? When summoned before his court, Barbier dressed his horse in ribbons. You couldn't see an inch of the beast's skin for rosettes and streamers. He rode into the court-house like that, and when monseigneur, faisant les gros yeux, asked what he meant, it was a marvel to see how he hinted that Madame la Préfeteuse had rigged him out.

"Well, Barbier's vein failed, and he had a bad time. We all told him it was no use looking for lost ore in Libertad, where earthquakes, and volcanoes, and pronunciamientos have been tumbling the gold about for ever so long. He went on all the same prospecting round his place, until we got tired of helping him. *Faut faire une fin, dites ?* If a man hasn't courage to start, he must be started with the whip. So at last Barbier saw he might travel or starve. As soon as he talked of something sensible we were ready enough to back him, of course. Amongst us we fitted him with all the *necessaire* and some of the *superflu* ; for he said he was going a long way into the woods.

"Before he left we gave our comrade a supper at Wolfe and De Baruele's. You remember their store ?"

Most certainly I had not forgotten the tiny store—an elysium for these poor diggers, which alone seems to connect them with the civilization they have deserted. At the mention of it, I saw again the long, rolling hills of Chontales, intersected by thin lines of timber, over which one toils to Libertad. I saw the little row of huts ; the mud-built church, like a magnified pigsty ; the track, always ankle-deep in clay, through which big, bearded men splash ponderously on their road to Wolfe and De Baruele's. That oasis in savagery consists of a toy-house store, in which one can scarcely turn, so blocked is it with goods ; while at the back lies a narrow, windy chamber, where digging visitors put up in nooks laboriously excavated amongst barrels, and bags, and rolls, and hams, and ironmongery, and "miscellaneous notions."

Awake betimes in the morning—for heat, and flies, and restless diggers allow no sleep after dawn—through gaping boards one sees a grove of plantains at the back. As the sun touches them, their great silken leaves unfurl and loosen. Backing that untended orchard the forest rises, golden in the early light. Each leaf is picked out brilliantly, and along the wall of trees birds glide and go on wings of prism. Big, sailing butterflies hover above the grass. Can this be the scene one had beheld at night

with a kind of superstitious awe—where moonbeams vanished as they fell, sucked in the white sea of mist; when the sleeping woods thrilled with mysterious sound; and the plantains, floating upwards from an unseen stem, sparkled against the deep blue sky, as touched with frost?—Rolling to the other side cautiously, for our mattresses are crankly balanced upon casks and bales, through a similar gap we behold the road. Indian girls, stunted and misshapen, go past by twos and threes, carrying water-jars, of which the shape has never changed since days of paganism—big, ugly globes, red and black, with double neck and spout, adorned with a snake of rudest fashion. Beyond the road more sunny meadows and more radiant woods, swelling up to the tableland of Chontales. How should I have forgotten Wolfe and De Baruele's?

"We entertained our man like a prince," continued Barbachella, "with tinned oysters, and American ham, and cheese. Then he made a speech, and said he was going to 'prospect' in Mosquito. We didn't like that news, be sure, for once already some of us had brought the wild Indians down, and you know very well we didn't want them again.

"Next day Barbier started, with two Mestizo vauriens and Person—you recollect Person, a giant, a colosse, from Auvergne, who used to write his name on the ceiling with a five-foot crowbar? They had a provision of charqui and maize; the whites carried a gun each, and a pistol. As we saw them cross the stream, little Captain Giraud said to me, '*Ces farçeurs-là, ils reviendront avec tous les sauvages de Mosquite sur leur derrière!*'

"Nothing was heard for two months; then, just after the rains began, a peon came into Wolfe's one night, and said coolly, betwixt one drink and another, 'There's a compadre of yours across the ford, shouting!'

"'That's Barbier, for an ounce!' cried Wolfe, for, mind you, nobody else could be coming from that side. Three or four of us

ran out, and there he stood, looking miserable enough, *ma foi* ! in the dusk and rain. The river at Libertad is no more than a brook by rights, but it was running, just then, like a sluice, with the noise of a waterfall. We shouted to him to wait whilst one of us fetched a rope, but he didn't seem to understand. Before we guessed what the fool was going to do, he ran into the water !

"That was rough ! We couldn't let him drown, but a fish wouldn't have been able to swim that brook. Barbier went before it like a leaf, and we should never have so much as seen his face again, if the current had not whirled him into a bush that overhung. He had just enough sense to cling in it—and there he was on one side, we on the other, staring. Wolfe ran back to fetch a rope and crowbar ; we made a drag as well as we could, then the strongest of us whizzed it into the bush. After a throw or two it stuck, then a fellow put another rope round his body, and hauled along. At length he reached Barbier, just in time, for the man was silly with cold and fright, and in another moment he would have gone under. The other hitched the rope round him, and worked back. Ouf ! that was a struggle ! The water beat as on a rock, pounding above, dragging below, and Barbier was swung across head under, like a drowned cayman. But there wasn't so much life to pick out between those two, when the others pulled them to land.

"We carried the chap to Wolfe and De Baruele's, and after rolling him about awhile, he came to and asked for drink, and we gave him enough to make grog of all Libertad river. And presently he sat up. 'Where's Person ?' asked Wolfe.

"*'Assassiné par les Indiens !'* said he, in a kind of shriek. *'Ainsi que vous serez tous !'*"

I saw how this memory affected my old comrade. His weatherworn face glowed, his big lissom hands worked clutchingly. "That frightened you ?" I said.

"Frightened ? If you'd seen the man, his face green and

white, his eyes burning through long hair all wet, you would have been afraid, as one is afraid of things uncanny. All ran for their arms; but when we remembered the swollen river, and heard the noise of rain outside, we felt easy that night. 'Tell us the story!' we said. But Barbier was too fevered to talk plain.

"We heard it next day. The rain had ceased, the stream gone down, and Barbier, dry and shaven, was all right again. This is what he told us.

"Those accursed peons who went with me had been traders in Mosquito, and spoke both Rama and Woolwa. Person and I knew nothing of them. We picked the brigands up whilst prospecting in the woods. They declared they could guide us to workings not far off in the Indian country, where nuggets lie like pebbles on a sea beach, and Person and I resolved to go with the fellows at any risk. I spent my last dollar in buying presents which they said were necessary, and we set out, as you know. The peons led us straight enough for six days, talking all the time of their discovery, and of the way we'd spend our gold. We passed several Rama villages, where the Indians looked askance at us, but gave no trouble. They were just like those we see here sometimes, except that they weren't drunk—big-headed, sleepy fellows, who watch you through the corner of their eyes, as long as they can keep awake, without saying a word.

"After six days the guides brought us to a path, two feet in breadth I daresay. On striking it, the rascals showed themselves very content, and chattered in some baragouinage of their own like crows at a feast. "We are coming to the place!" they said, and presently we reached a village bigger than any we had seen, containing, perhaps, two thousand inhabitants and a king. Except for size it didn't differ from the others. His Rama majesty lived in a hut, surrounded by pigsties for the royal consorts. He was not effusive, *ma foi!* took our presents without a word, but with a look very unsuccessful, if it was meant to show gratitude. But nobody interfered with us, and, so far as the peons chose to tell,

nobody asked what we wanted. They let us rebuild a hut that had tumbled to ruin, and after a few hours nobody seemed to trouble about us. The peons said we ought to stop a day or two to disarm suspicion, while they looked round. If we had hidden in the woods, for certain the Ramas would have discovered and murdered us. I did not see clear, but they appeared to know what they were about, and our lives hung on a thread.

“I had already begun to think that the peons were not acting square. They talked too much in their barbarous patois, and disputed warmly. Our friend Person was one of those fellows who believe that six foot of fool’s flesh will carry itself through anything. One could not advise with him.

“After looking innocent a day or two, we took our guns and our pannikins early one morning, and set off into the woods. The peons led us to a creek, where, with infinite precaution, they washed a little mud. Such a show there was in the cup, that Person cried, “You brought it with you, rascals!” “Come and try for yourselves!” said they, climbing up the bank, and so we did. We washed, and found more than they. “Notre fortune est faite!” cried we. “Let us talk!” said one of the peons.

“We sat on the bank, all four. “This is nothing,” began the eldest, Miguele. “Before we could wash out fifty ounces, the Ramas would be upon us. They know that so well, that they don’t trouble. If we escaped this king, he’d raise the country. It wasn’t worth while to come so far to lose our heads, and we two could have managed that without your aid.”

“I was furious with disappointment. Person sat staring like a bull before a fence. But Miguele had not done.

““For centuries,” said he, “the Indians have been picking up gold here and in other places known to them. They think gold sacred, and he who finds a nugget is believed to be favoured by the gods. Listen! They have a cart-load stored

in their temple. That's what Salvador and I have risked our lives for !”

“ “ Will they fight for it ? ” I asked.

“ “ Certainly, if they catch us.”

“ “ And how shall we get away with the plunder ? ”

“ “ Salvador and I have thought of that. The question is, are you with us ? ”

“ “ It was wholesale murder he intended. I saw that in the brigand's face. I am not more particular than others, but the idea did not present itself to me in attractive colours. Besides, it was a terrible risk. Enfin, “ We will talk of this again ! ” I said.

“ “ That can't be allowed,” said Salvador, a brute of a fellow, who counted his murders, I should think, as girls count lovers. “ We hang together ! ” Then I noticed that these coquins had got possession of our arms whilst we washed in the brook.

“ “ Person cried out, “ Did you say there was a cart-load of gold in the temple ? Then I'm with you, to live like a prince, or die like a thief.” I added, “ And I also ! ” for when Person went over, it was stupid to hesitate. In a flash of intelligence I saw then what the disputes had been about. Salvador wished to kill me on the road.

“ “ We went back to the village, our late servants carrying the fire-arms. That night they told us the plan. Next full moon brought with it the great Indian feast of the year, between harvest and seed-time. Everybody in the village would be drunk, for these Ramas, when at home, don't allow themselves the joy of intoxication more than once a quarter ; but then they take a fit of it. Only a few priests would be left on guard at the temple, which stood in a very lonely place some miles off. There was a reasonable chance that they also would take the opportunity of enjoying themselves. No one would be likely to visit the spot, after the first ceremonies over, for a week or more. Even if one of the attendants should escape, Miguele declared that everybody

in the village would be too drunk to understand his tale, except the boys and women. A river flowed beneath the temple, by which one could escape to Bluefields with the gold, and there was always a score of canoes lying on the bank. The peons' scheme had been carefully thought out, and it promised success.

“‘We were not to go near the place until the time arrived. Meanwhile we hung about, looking innocent ; but if ever a man carried his conscience in his face I was he. Because, *mes amis*, I am not a fool. It was quite plain that those ruffians didn't trust me, and they clung to my arms. What for? That was the question I asked myself.

“‘The days dragged through slowly enough, but they passed too quick. The women were busy as ants, making drink, laying in provisions, looking up their husbands' robes. It was then our privilege to see Ramas wide awake, but they did not appear to greater advantage. When the Indian is sleepy, he throws things at his wife, and often misses ; but when roused to the sense of manhood by a prospect of drink, he stands up and pounds her like clay. They are brave, these Ramas, but they are dead to the feeling of chivalry. It almost reconciled me to the idea of killing a few, to observe what brutes they are.

“‘The day arrived at last. At midnight before, the king and all his warriors left the town. Miguele told us that they had gone to the temple, there to offer up a baby or two ; I felt more and more like an executioner handsomely paid for doing retributive justice. At dawn they returned, and the farce began. It is expected as a compliment from strangers that they should go into the street and admire the king's greatness ; so we went. First marched a score of priests clad in mantles made entirely of quetzal feathers ; some of which were so old and moth-eaten as to show generations of wear. After them came a lot of wild Indians, full-dressed in a leopard's tail apiece, making noises on a sort of flute—the thigh-bone of an enemy, Miguele declared. Three or four hundred howling youths pressed upon them, brandishing spears

and machetes. Then came the warriors, painted like demons, coronets of feathers on their heads, cape and waist-cloth of the same, and long strips of gaudy plumage trailing on the ground. They danced and sang, rattling spears. Those few who had guns fired without ceasing. They held the piece at arm's length, tumbled head over heels with the recoil, and sprang up again to load like men of indiarubber. The royal consorts marched next, fifty or so, dancing before the monarch; their feather head-dress and mantles shone like angel's wings enfolding a devil. A few old men followed, bent with wisdom, and tottering with experience, and then the king, dressed from head to foot in crests of humming-bird, with long feathers of the quetzal worked in here and there like an untidy fringe. After him all the gamins of the village passed, yelling as hard as they could. We all bowed as the king went by; but he paid no attention. His royal eyes were fixed upon the ground, and all the cares of the world sat upon his brow.

“‘One clear day would suffice for our work. Miguele pointed out to the king that our lives were not safe amongst his drunken subjects, and suggested that we should move into the palace. As the fellow had foreseen, this proposal did not exactly commend itself to a nigger sovereign with half a hundred wives. We were refused. Then said Miguele, “Your majesty will allow us to hunt in the neighbourhood whilst this feast lasts; for these caballeros are Frenchmen, and the consul at Bluefields will make a palaver if any harm befall them!” Our little chief was frightened, for King George doesn't stand nonsense. “Go where you will,” said he, and the royal consorts raised a simultaneous howl of disappointment.’”

It may be well to explain in a parenthesis—seeing that the politics of Mosquito are not things generally known—that King George is the supreme monarch of these Indians. This naked rascal alone, amongst earthly potentates, enjoys the privilege of quartering our Union Jack upon his flag. It was

presented him, I believe, by Charles the Second, when the Musquito savages were vastly useful in our buccaneering wars.

“‘So,’ continued Barbier, ‘we were at liberty to absent ourselves without suspicion for a week. Everything had gone just as the infernal cunning of the villains wished. We strolled back to our hut. The fun had begun already, and warriors staggered about in every stage of pious intoxication. One might have supposed the town bombarded, so fast and furious was the discharge of guns. A spear whizzed between Salvador and myself, and stuck in a wall, quivering and gyrating. Person had his beard singed with the flame of a musket. It was time to pack, and we went. The live stock was running in fright towards the jungle, and we caught several chickens and a kid.

“‘The forest was still dripping with dew when we entered it. A difficult march all round the village lay before us; for we had struck the woods just opposite to our proper course. Miguele guided us without a fault. The most desperate joviality was reigning in the village, which lay close on our left hand all day. When we came upon the farm-grounds, walking grew easier; but the afternoon had far advanced before Miguele lighted upon the path we sought. “Now,” said he, “keep a look-out for your lives. It’s a hundred chances nobody comes by; but if an Indian should appear, do you fools try to look as if you were taking a promenade. I’ll account for him!” He still kept my gun and pistol.

“‘We met no one. Dusk settled on the woods, whilst it was still broad daylight in the open. We camped and ate our stolen kid. When the moon rose, Miguele called us. I had taken an opportunity to sound Person whilst the peons slept, but he was as mad for the plunder as they, at the price of any crime.

“‘We travelled two miles in forest so high and so thick that the moonbeams could hardly reach our path. A spangle of light filtered through here and there, scarce bigger than a glowworm’s

lamp where it dropped. By the glimmer reflected from above, we followed Salvador, who crept cautiously along. Miguele came last. As we went duskily, stealing from turn to turn of the path, I knew what it is to be a robber and an assassin. Camarades, the sensation is not agreeable.

“‘ Suddenly Salvador came to a halt. “ The temple is there ! ” muttered Miguele behind me, and we crept into the bush whilst Salvador reconnoitred. He returned presently, and took Person by the arm whispering—we followed. Before us, hidden amongst trees that met above its roof, stood a low, dark building of logs on a mound. I could see little of its size and shape, for all was dim ; a red glow shone betwixt the timbers, as of a mouldering fire inside ; a sickly smell hung on the air.

“ ‘ We stole up, mounted the steps of turf, and peered through the chinks. A fire on the ground showed partitions of skin hanging. Between the shadows they cast, black shapeless things glimmered under the walls. Two men lay asleep before the fire ; their bracelets glistened. When we had looked long and carefully, Miguele drew us apart and whispered. We went round, two on each side, to seek other crevices. I thought for an instant of slipping away into the bush, but what would be the good of that ? The Indians would catch me, or I should starve.

“ ‘ All was dark round the temple, and we learned nothing. There might be a score of priests inside, but Miguele thought it unlikely ; in any case, he was determined to risk it. After two or three words of counsel we crept to the door again, and groped long for the fastening. None could be found. By a whisper and a clasp of the hand, Miguele directed us to put our shoulders to the wood. We did so. “ Now ! ” he muttered, and with a crash the door gave way.

“ ‘ I fell back. The sleeping men sprang to their feet with a howl. Salvador cut one down, but the Indian gripped him by the naked heel in his teeth ; the other got Person by the throat. Miguele ran his machete through him, but he held on till the

giant flung him bodily against the wall, toppling the idols down with a rattle. Then the others turned to Salvador, who was yelling with pain and fear. But suddenly an awful boom ! The great drum of the temple rang out, seeming to rock the solid walls. Miguele leaped towards the sound ; Salvador and Person, struggling with the Indian, dragged him across the fire, which threw up a fountain of sparks as the red-hot embers scattered ; a reek of burning skins and feathers choked us, but all was still now. " A light ! " cried Miguele hoarsely. " In twenty minutes the Indians will be here ! "

" Salvador paused with the match in his hand, whispering, " Hush ! " A faint humming noise reached our ears. " Quick, hombre ! " cried Miguele. " It is the river. " But as he spoke a roar and a yell announced the Indians. They had followed us ! I rushed out and round the temple. The path was full of them, hurrying and shouting. Their spear-points glittered. Person, I think, was after me, but a huge warrior pinned him in the dusk. At the other end of the building the path opened. I could just see it. I ran along, leaving the din of hell behind. Half-a-dozen pistol-shots rang above the Indians' yelling, and then all was over with those assassins.

" I ran fifty yards, and came to a river suddenly. It flowed clear and white as glass in the moonbeams, but a black shadow of the forest on each side bounded it. Half-a-dozen canoes lay there, with paddles inside. I sprang into one, cut the rattan fastening, and dropped down under the bank. But what man or what crew could escape Mosquito Indians on the water ? As soon as they got a light they would miss me, and then I was caught, as sure as death. I pushed across the moonlit water, and paddled up. There was a bend just above the boat-place, and I had passed it when the Indians came running down. I caught a branch, and lay still. Shouting to each other, they leaped into canoes, and shot down the channel like a flash. No one thought of searching up-stream, for where could a man fly but towards

Bluefields? A loud and angry throng remained on the bank, and I could see how drunk they all were. Before the boats had passed beyond sight, some began to stagger back. Presently the big drum sounded again, and the rest followed. It was life or death. Pulling cautiously by the branches, I went up. Long before I got out of hearing a horrid noise proclaimed that the Indian women had reached the spot.'

"That was Barbier's story!" continued the old digger. "He had a fearful time in the woods, as you may suppose, seeing an Indian in every bush. As near as he could calculate, it took him four weeks to reach Libertad. Fortunately, he was carrying the bag of charqui, and so he did not starve."

"Did the Ramas come after him to Libertad?" I asked.

"No. We heard nothing of them."

"Frankly, now, Barbachella," I said after a long pause, "do you believe the story? Didn't any of the diggers think it strange that there should be an Indian village within six days of Libertad, where the value of gold is not known?"

"Well, I don't know," answered Barbachella meditatively. "A responsible man would not be hasty to say what there is or there isn't in the forests of Mosquito. But there were some who looked askance at Barbier when he came back from the woods one day with a bag of dust—which don't grow on trees in Chontales—and paid his debts, and said he was going home. A washerwoman swore she'd seen him crossing the brook with a heavy load. And they talked after he'd gone, how his saddle-bags were heavier than a mule could carry. It's generally thought in Libertad—I may say as much as that—that if there was any truth in Barbier's story, he didn't tell the whole of it, and that he ought to be hanged if there isn't. Anyway, he had better not come to Libertad again."

A JEWISH ROMANCE.

My courier in the Servian war was a young Austrian Jew, son of a rich tradesman at Semlin. Business had actually ceased along the Danube, and he was delighted to serve me as interpreter and factotum. With him I went to Paratchin, a household word in the days when doughty little Milan caracolled towards the field of glory. Many great and puissant seigneurs stir the irreverent to laughter, if seen too close, but none so droll as this princelet. Always alone and silent, though surrounded by his staff, he went shaking in the saddle like an unwholesome jelly. His face was white and flaccid, his sullen, round, black eyes moved slowly, as those of a stupid boy in sulks. Behind him tramped long battalions of peasant soldiery, ill-clothed in brown and blue, ill-drilled, ill-armed, ill-fed. Silent and anxious they floundered through the clay in boots of paper, moodily pressing through a crowd of onlookers, yet filthier and more miserable than themselves. Then, amongst the train went Rictics in his brougham, the prime minister. He is a self-made man, admirers say, and a glance will tell in what craft he served his apprenticeship. No unprofessional hand could have arranged that *coiffure*. If there are still students of chiromancy, I should like to have their unbiassed judgment upon M. Rictic's hands. Fat and damp they are as a soaped sponge. Ceaselessly and softly they creep, the fingers moving like those pale, blind things called syrens.

I stopped at the dingy hotel, of which the public had so many

descriptions at the time. A foul place it was, beyond anything that Englishmen could conceive, but a palace, a pride, a home of delirious delight to the Servian. The fare consisted always of the same barbarous and filthy *plats*, unless one could buy some fish, or game, or vegetables. An ancient Serb dwelt in Paratchin, who used, when the fancy seized him, to throw a net in the muddy Tcherná. One of his favourite draws was beneath the hut of a Jewish family, and there I commonly sought him towards sunset, to buy fish, and examine his take. The old mother would be sitting outside the doorway, her sober eldest daughters round, and children playing with unsightly toys amongst their feet. The father I had already made acquaintance with, a dirty old man, clad in fez and tattered gaberdine. His long lean figure stooped, so that the claw-like hands swung almost at the level of his knees. An ugly patriarch indeed! If his face was ever washed, the rain performed that unpleasant operation. His clothes hung on him from Passover to Passover. But this squalid old wretch was a power in his district. The Jew is Jew wherever one finds him, most conspicuously flourishing where poverty is most wretched. I sent my interpreter to change some English gold in the town, and of course he applied to his co-religionist. The usurer had never seen, perhaps had never heard of a sovereign before, but upon the assurance that these coins were gold, the mere spirit of gambling tempted him to offer a napoleon apiece. An unlikely subject to be mixed up in this true romance I am telling! But for all his filthy habits, and his stupendous ignorance, he was a century in advance of those about him. I suppose that all the coin of that miserable village passed through his bird-like fingers. Merciless they were, as they were mercilessly dealt with.

Everybody knows that the Jew is refused rights of citizenship throughout Servia and Roumania. At the congress of Berlin these countries agreed to remove all disabilities of creed in return for the independence granted them—a condition which they are

seeking to elude. It is not so generally understood that the Jews were actually banished from Servia, a few years back, an act of barbarity which shows M. Rictic's forethought. He perceived that Europe would demand the enfranchisement of his victims, sooner or later; and he got rid of them. It is easy to prevent Jews settling in a country, where public opinion approves any outrage, and the foreign press has no correspondents. Roumania neglected to take this precaution, and all her Jews are "on her back," so to put it. The only exemption, and that partial, to this degree of exile was allowed to those who had been born, and had resided twenty years in one place. The family I tell of came under this clause. Five years had been granted such for preparing their removal, and these people had still some months to remain in the country where their forefathers had dwelt for three hundred years. After leaving Paratchin, they were free to dwell at Belgrade if they chose, under the strictest system of passports.

The old man had a fat, subdued wife, four daughters grown up, and children in numbers unknown. The three eldest girls were tall, fair, rather shapeless, and rather dull, much like the Christian lasses round. Their spirits might have improved had they seen a chance of marriage, but this could never be. Not a beggar in Paratchin so impious as to take a Jewish wife, and the prospect of celibacy is depressing to maidens. But the family, like most of those south of the Danube, was Spanish by origin, and Spanish, of a sort, was their common tongue. A very large proportion of the Jews expelled from Spain sought shelter, and obtained it, from the Moslem. The fourth daughter was a curious "return" to the old type. I have seen thousands like her in Mexico, lithe, black-eyed, laughing girls, with a full bódice, a moist red lip, and a pencilling of jetty down above it. I do not mean to give an idea that this little Jewess was a beauty. She struck me by force of contrast, so dark where all were fair, so saucy and restless in that dull household. I do not care myself for these full-blooded creatures. Whilst young and slender,

smooth-skinned, bright-eyed, slim-cheeked, they are pleasant to see. But the time arrives for them much sooner than for others, when voice and features thicken, and the laugh becomes vulgar. There were no such signs as yet in the girl, but as she was known to every "special correspondent" who visited Paratchin—what a motley crowd they were!—I do not wish to make myself absurd by overpraising my heroine.

Whilst the wife and her elder daughters sat staidly sewing of a night, as I have described, upon the banks of the muddy Tcherná, Juanita whisked to and fro, romped with the children, laughed at my Spanish, hailed a play-fellow across the river; in short, displayed the tricks of a Boeotian beauty in presence of men unattached; for I was accompanied on these occasions, sometimes by a *confrère*, always by my interpreter. By-the-bye, I do not recollect whether the damsel was really called Juanita or no. By that Christian and romantic name we specials knew her, and that is enough. Be it also observed in this place that the sequel of the story was forwarded me long ago by my young courier, who was peculiarly qualified to give its details correct, as will be seen.

Attached to the army train, and stationed at Paratchin, was at this time a youth whom I shall call Obrenovitch, a Servian, of course. Talking German fluently, and understanding a little French, he made himself very useful to foreign correspondents, who were always in trouble with the native authorities. Not seldom he accompanied me on my evening walks, and thus became acquainted with the Jewish family. Obrenovitch was a tall fellow, dark, and sufficiently good-looking, with less secretiveness than have most of his race. He gave me an idea, at least, of courage and veracity, rare in the Serb character. His age and his inches marked him for "glory," but as he could raise a few pounds, and had a relation who kept shop in Belgrade, of course he received a semi-civil appointment in Paratchin. A large gathering of such aristocratic youths dwelt in our hostelry. Like them, Obrenovitch wore a ponderous sabre, gold lace at every

seam, large spurs with an extra clank, and a pistol never drawn and never laid aside. With them he drank beer under the acacias of our courtyard, stood treat to passing Russians, and laid feeble ambushes for the landlord's wife, the one pretty woman in Servia, barring our little Jewess.

Nothing remarkable passed between her and Obrenovitch under my eye. The Servian youth clanked his spurs and sabre, addressing the outlawed family like an amiable prince. They listened with apparent submission, all but Juanita, who laughed in his face and ran away. Many foreigners discovered this small tribe of Judah by-and-by. Loud-voiced, laughing, reckless Russians haunted its cottage, correspondents of every nation strolled at evening time to jest with Juanita. And after awhile, so I was told, a high Servian official caught sight of her, and the little Jewish girl found favour in his eyes accustomed to hard-featured, sapless women. The first I knew of a passion consuming Obrenovitch was revealed by his indignation at an order directing him to transfer his valuable services to Deligrad. He ascribed this to jealousy. A few days after, I also left Paratchin, never more to see that miserable village, as I hope, unless in nightmare dreams.

The parent of the family received a contract for bread; it was not given but forced upon him, for that worthy man had never thought of such a large transaction. He displayed, however, a marvellous quickness to grasp the *métier*. Complaints poured in, but secure in his mysterious protection, the contractor heeded them not. I myself was constrained to sign a protest drawn up by the doctors, and on that account I did not dare visit the cottage to bid the family good-bye.

At the front things grew worse and worse, as time went on. Though the Turks held back, the Servians would not stand. And as the cowardice of the natives became more apparent, the soldiers of fortune who led them threw off all restraint. They had collected from the four winds of heaven for this battle-field. Much of the organization framed by Slave Committees for a

Bulgarian war came handy to the Servians. There are guileless persons who believe that the "atrocities" were doubly criminal because unprovoked, but guileless persons are not competent to follow the Eastern question. I had the pleasure of a somewhat close acquaintance with an American general, who was engaged to head the rebels; we met again in the Bulgarian war. He had served with distinction in the Turkish army during the Crimean struggle, with the Confederates, where he earned the rank of lieutenant-general, and in the Franco-German war, in which he commanded a division on the Loire. His intended aide-de-camp I also know, but the hint of his name might cause my amusing friend an injury. T—— was prepared to officer the Bulgarian "army" with Americans and Frenchmen, few of whom remained after their chief's retirement. He got no farther than Belgrade, the massacres having ruined his enterprise, and the Servians resolving, after some hesitation, to put their whole trust in Tchernayeff. Thus the command fell into Russian hands. They came in swarms, all the "broken men," the *gens déclassés*, the Dugald Dalgettys of the North; princes without a *sou*, generals in flight from justice, Imperial Chamberlains dismissed for petty larceny, deserters, convicts, and a few honest madmen. They fought, and many died; but when the cowardice of the Servians became apparent, evil instincts ruled supreme. What ghastly humours we saw at Tchernayeff's head-quarters! How the champagne flowed, and how the subscriptions vanished at the card-table. Do not fancy that ladies were quite absent. A red cross is mounted as easily as an epaulette. The good old princess who imported twelve nuns from her own Moscow convent to nurse the wounded shook off from her feet the dust of our unholy camp and fled. Tchernayeff had to bear that and worse. He heard a colonel of his own staff accused at his own table of highway robbery, and dared not heed.

All these reckless fellows, reckless if no worse, passed through Paratchin to the front. The inhabitants who could afford it left,

or sent away their daughters. The Jewish family lay in especial danger, for they had no sympathy to expect. Their protector offered them a house by his own, but all the children could not be accommodated in it, and they declined to separate. Meanwhile, complaints of mouldy bread and rotten biscuit fell in thicker and hotter. Whilst Servians only grumbled, the contractor might be indifferent, but one night the Russian doctor called an indignation meeting of compatriots who chanced to be at Paratchin. They held council under the acacias, seeking wisdom from *slibovitz* and *vodka*. Vengeance was sworn unanimously, and the young ruffians dashed out, with sticks and lanterns. The Jew's cottage stood less than a hundred yards away, and in three minutes they were clanging at the door.

But such assaults, and more serious still, are not strange to children of Israel whose evil fate has planted them in Servia. Walls, windows, and door are constructed to withstand a siege, and the inmates can generally hold them, with a threat of fire-arms, until the police comes up. That event, as a rule, saves their lives, though it seldom preserves their property. But the assailants in this case were no timid Servians. Tchernayeff's volunteers had faults enough, but want of daring had not a place among them. They laughed at the old man's gun, and worked with levers. Some smashed the little casements—of glass they were, a rare boast for the housewife—and tried to force themselves through ; but feminine weapons proved more than a match for them at this disadvantage. Between laughter and rage they supplicated the comrades below to let them drop, but news of women in the house redoubled their assailants' ardour. All the inhabitants of Paratchin had arrived to see the fun, with a number of police, who would not have dared meddle with the amusements of their "allies," had they wished. Though the family protector urged them with threats to interfere, they quietly looked on, whilst crowbar and mallet shattered the house.

A Russian colonel had arrived that evening at the inn. To him the magistrate hurried and told his story. The colonel laughed, but willingly consented to stop the scandal. Just as the dignitaries reached the house, its door gave way, and pell mell the stormers entered—Russians in front, whooping like big, naughty boys, Servians at their back, dumb and vicious as wolves. As they broke in, the women bolted through a hidden door, only to rush back, another crowd behind them. Then ensued a *mêlée*, women screaming, men shouting, glass smashing, boards rifting, and Russians laughing. The old man had not tried to escape, but sat upon a chest, gaping with fear, but obstinate as a Jew. He was promptly thrown off, and a dozen axes rang on the iron fastenings. The spoilers had not room to work, and man after man fell crushed to the ground, some badly gashed by the whirling blades. The colonel purpled with anger, seeing his orders disregarded and unheard—flashed his sword, and cut a path through the tumult as though he were storming a Turkish battery. Several officers gathered to him, and in three minutes the house was clear. Some Servians had sustained grievous injury, but they were pitched out headlong by the Russians, so soon as these recognized the colonel's uniform. Then they stood at attention and saluted.

The anger of their chief was not serious, and a few brief words apparently restored a friendly feeling. Then the colonel turned to the civil magnate, thanked him for calling his attention to this disgraceful scene, and assured him that there would be no repetition of it. He himself would be responsible for the house and its inmates. This did not suit the magistrate, but whilst he made such protest as he dared, three convalescents, Russians, marched up. They grounded their rifles stolidly, and looked about like good-natured bull-dogs; men who could not hurt a fly for wantonness, but would shoot their fathers at a word. There was nothing for it but to submit, though the old Jew made a dismal outcry, betwixt pain, fear, and anger; the women

seemed too thoroughly frightened to care. After posting his gendarmes about the spot, the magistrate retired.

Within half an hour a panting policeman called him, up again. The Jew's house had broken into flames, and the hurly burly had begun once more. When the magistrate arrived, the roof had already fallen, like a house of cards at a breath. The old Jew, dancing and tearing his hair before the blaze, took all the patriarchs to witness that the Russians had sacked his money and fired his house; upon which one of them struck him with his sword-hilt, knocking him senseless. This sufficed to stifle inquiry, and the magistrate asked only whither the girls had fled. Two or three were found in neighbouring huts, and though Juanita was not one of them, her protector withdrew with mind at ease, since she was a general favourite. As he departed, Obrenovitch came up in sore anxiety, returned from his mission to hear this dreadful news. For a length of time the young fellow wandered up and down the village, until the last gossip had turned in; then he sought the hostelry in great distress. The Russians were just breaking up a carouse, held to celebrate this droll adventure—an "excuse for the glass" as good as any. As they exchanged "good nights" with the colonel, more boisterous than discipline approves, Obrenovitch drew back into the shadow, for his uniform was already mocked by these "allies." The old colonel came clanking by without notice, unlocked a door, and entered. Lilting a Russian song under his breath, he sought for a match, and struck it; then suddenly broke into oaths and exclamations. "Hi, Popovitch, Ivanoff, hi! What are you doing here, you hussy? Get out!" The door flung open, and a sobbing girl fell into the Servian's arms. He recognized Juanita in the candle-light. The fuming colonel, rushing after, summoned every officer around him. They stood not far off, laughing and whispering together, and at the call ran up, rather unsteadily. Two of them confessed at once, seeing their chief enraged, that they had kidnapped the little Jewess, stolen

the key of his room, and locked her in, without doing her any harm. The good-tempered colonel swore at them blithely, and ordered the girl to be taken home, or somewhere, anywhere, out of the inn. The young fellows who had played this excellent joke, turned towards her, and discovered Obrenovitch. He refused to let the girl go, and struck the Russian who angrily seized hold of her. This was too much for the colonel's temper. With his sheathed sword he knocked Obrenovitch flat, and roared for the patrol. Lover and lady were dragged to the door, and when the soldiers came they took the pair into custody. Luckily, the officer on guard was a friend of our young Servian's, and there was no other prisoner. Obrenovitch lay all night in a filthy den, too mazed to speak a word to his companion.

At morning a report of the affair came to the magistrate, and he waxed furious with jealousy. Orders were issued to convey the whole Jewish family to Semendria on their way to Belgrade; with difficulty they obtained a cart for their father's journey. The Servian commandant, influenced by his colleague, put Obrenovitch under arrest for brawling with "our valued allies," and confined him to the wretched cottage where he had quarters. From his window the youth saw a miserable procession, the girls afoot, parents and young children in the cart, soldiers marching alongside. Sightings of this kind were the most frequent of the day's events in Servia, where two hundred thousand souls were burnt out of house and home to gratify the ambition of M. Rictics, and the greed of little Milan. Obrenovitch had seen with equanimity a thousand refugees pass every day, but a conviction of the wickedness of the war had not possessed him till that moment. It had seemed not at all unnatural that mere peasants should suffer for the greater glory of their country, that is to fill the pockets of the upper classes. But matters now struck him in another light. Cold and wet, and the objectionable Turk made life wretched at the front, and bullying Russians harried the rear. Filled with righteous indignation, Obrenovitch resolved

to abandon his unhappy country, and seek a home beyond the Danube with this persecuted girl.

Forty-eight hours after, the arrest was raised, and our young hero sallied forth, impatient to fulfil his design. At the door a Russian met him, saluted with courtesy, and demanded a reference to his friends. Obrenovitch asked an explanation. In accents rather vague, but with a most honourable bearing, the officer reminded him of the boxing-match ; it is rather an odd thing that men become more punctilious and more quarrelsome on campaign. Obrenovitch offered excuses in vain, the emissary declaring that he had no commission to receive them. And so the unlucky youth went out, and duly accepted a bullet in his thigh. The Russians, pleased to meet a Servian of pluck, forbade inquiry, and as soon as he could be moved they sent him towards Belgrade.

The Jewish family had saved positively nothing but the clothes they wore. Nearly dead they were with hunger, misery, and fatigue on reaching Semendria. But misfortune had not yet ceased to follow them. Their father had put away the bulk of his wealth in Austrian territory, but these events had frightened him out of his wits for the time, and he could not remember, or could not be induced to tell, where it lay. The family would have starved to death—many thousands were starving all round—had not some of their own people aided them. Two or three households were waiting the hour of exile in Semendria, and they supported their own kith in undeserved misfortune. But a few days afterwards the magistrate so often named rode from Paratchin to observe how his schemes were prospering. They did not appear satisfactory, and he summoned the commandant to help him. Next day the charitable Jews received warning that “interference with the course of justice” would not be allowed, and at the same time the old man was cited to show cause why he had stopped at Semendria instead of going further to Belgrade. Cause enough he could show without stirring from

his bed or opening his mouth, but the police dragged him, with his old wife, before the commandant, by whom they were confined to jail—such a jail! The children went in sad procession to beg mercy, first to the military official, who would not see them, then to their old acquaintance, the Paratchin magistrate. He had the cynical audacity to send them a message, desiring Juanita to come alone. They withdrew, less indignant than heartbroken. And when they got back to the house that had sheltered them, sorrowfully the inmates declared that they could no longer afford them charity.

It is very fine for bold Britons to declare that these poor people showed barbarity and cowardice in obeying the orders of the commandant. Be it remembered that their life was not secure, that they also had property and children. The Jew exists in Servia upon sufferance; he is reared in oppression, every man's hand is against him as in the Middle Ages of Western Europe. Only by bribes continually renewed can he obtain such protection of mere life as the lowest wretch enjoys elsewhere; and when the debt becomes too heavy, or the temptation too great, his creditor in office can wipe out all scores by withholding that protection for an hour. I have but pity for those poor folk, though they turned the girls into the street with a small present of money. Things were desperate indeed with my heroine, and her sisters despairing urged her to visit the magistrate.

At this crisis my ex-interpreter came upon them, sitting in the mud and snow. An Austrian Jew he was, as I have said, and a very honest, kindly young fellow. The kinship of blood would have urged him to do something for these unfortunates, had they all been uninteresting alike. But Juanita's southern charms had not passed him unnoticed, when we used to sit and laugh beside the cottage at Paratchin. Like a prudent youth he had kept silence, waiting till my return northward should give him an opportunity to consult his parents. He was even now on his way back, with authority to ask the girl's hand, if the dowry should be

reasonable. Fancy then his emotions upon hearing the tale she recounted! Without delay he engaged a vehicle, and drove all the family to Belgrade, bought them a pass before the tyrant could forbid, and lodged them at his father's house across the Danube. Then, returning by next boat, he sought an interview with the Russian general at Belgrade. By a judicious distribution of roubles he obtained it. The general was very wroth, and telegraphed *en maître* to set the old couple free. My Austrian made all haste to find them, and safely transported the pair to Semlin. Care and quiet restored the father's mind, so that he was able to endow Juanita with a satisfactory sum.

As for the gentleman I have called Obrenovitch, he duly deserted, and was condemned to death *par contumace*. I know no more of him. The magistrate flourishes, no doubt, and is still ready to demonstrate for all inquirers how great and good and virtuous is the Servian government, and what a blessed time humanity will have when its sway is extended over all Europe. You may think this idea an exaggeration, but hark to the published words of M. Rictics, the heaven-born minister of a holy state—"La jeunesse Serbe est destinée à renouveler le sang épuisé de l'Europe."

A STORY OF THE TRANSVAAL.

THE Cape boer, and especially he of the Transvaal, is a creature beyond all understanding. To converse with him, you would think that the interests of farm and stock bounded his care of things sublunary. To watch his life you might suppose that it rested on the purest dogmatic religion. To measure his huge limbs, tallowy and flaccid, to observe his ox-like eye and movements ponderously doubting, you would pronounce him the mildest of humanity. And in each of these conclusions you would be curiously mistaken. The boer has feelings, if not principles, of such strength that he has sacrificed his all for them. Not once nor twice, but thrice already he has left home and flock rather than endure a foreign rule. No oppression weighed on him. The little finger of his chosen governors was heavier than our English loins. He made not even protests, asked no redress, but rose and went into the wilderness. The piety also which sits so close upon him is to be mistrusted. Sincere it is, of its kind, for a man takes no profit from hypocrisy out yonder; but it does not often bar him from acts that we think criminal, when temptation rises, nor from such vice as his slow fancy can imagine.

The simple boer displays an ingenuity quite surprising in fraudulent law-practice, and his moral courage in a bad cause would be believed by no one who had not dealt with him. Yet no man is easier to cheat. Though his own title-deeds be forged, he credits those of his neighbour. I had once occasion to look

into the title of Vooruitzicht—the farm now christened Kimberley, but famous through all time as New Rush Diamond Field. That property was sold upon the strength of a registered division or settlement which proved on later investigation to be a forgery. Thereupon the legal heirs brought an action, which they lost on evidence that their own title-deeds were false. The partition being forged, and the last title fraudulent, new claimants arose, who depended on a deed of gift which was found to be unregistered. Vooruitzicht had been lost at cards—the biggest stake ever played on earth!—but the boer, recovering his senses after a nap, declined to fulfil the bargain. These claims were severally adjudicated, and half-a-dozen others had cropped up, when Government stepped in and closed all litigation, paying 100,000*l.* for the property. Each of the plaintiffs knew, and was proved to know, that his case rested on a falsehood. In spite of that evidence, I am not prepared to dispute their honesty in general, nor their profound sense of religion. Is not the boer beyond understanding?

It seems likely that his habits and peculiarities will command our attention, of an *ex-post-facto* sort may be, in a very little while. Though the boer be slow, the Kaffir is monstrous quick, and it is he who drives at present. There is not in history, perhaps, the record of a peaceful change so great, in so short a time, as that effected in South Africa by the discovery of diamonds. Its economical results have scarcely begun to appear, for the bent of a pastoral race, in debt beyond all visible hope of payment, is to hoard. But the political effect was manifest from the beginning. All the Kaffir tribes round, all the Bastards and Corannas, acquired arms by their labour in the Diamond Fields. As early as 1871, three months after the “rush,” it became evident that the importation of fire-arms could not be stopped, nor could the blacks be prevented from earning them. But the boers changed none of their overbearing tactics, the nature of which I am about to show in a curious tale.

Returning from South Africa, in 1872, amongst my shipmates was a shy old Hollander who held communication with none of us. A few words of Spanish which I chanced to use drew him from his shell at length. It warmed his heart, he told me, to catch accents which, to my unbiassed ear, seem a commingling of lisp and snarl and scream. Speaking no English and very little French, he could talk with no one but myself. But our conversation flagged ; Dr. Treksteer carried formality so far as to ask no information when imparting none—a fine trait, and, in my experience, unusual, but subversive of chatter. Whence he came, and what he had been doing in those parts, I should never have heard, most likely, save for an accident—which I have been regretting ever since, for this good man cost me some money and much trouble, as I shall show.

After a very brief gossip, shyness and timidity closed again over Dr. Treksteer, whilst I felt little inclination to exchange common-places in a patchwork lingo of bad Spanish and bad French respectively. The doctor, in fact, was so wholly shut out from our general conversation that a fortnight passed before he seemed to understand how every other passenger had come direct from the Diamond Fields. Upon learning this fact, however, he displayed a certain curiosity and interest. He began to seek me, his interpreter, and to hang about the *fumoir* instead of smoking lonely pipes on deck. It was evident that some special motive influenced him, and I asked the question, after some days. He apologized in a flurry, and resumed his former habits. But upon a certain afternoon, somebody proposed to make an exhibition of diamonds—and glorious was the show. From belts and boxes and gimlet-holes in squares of wood the gems were brought to view. Each man ranged his treasure in a little pyramid before him, and even the quartermasters and the boatswain's mate came to see—each one of whom retired with a firm determination to desert on his next voyage. A display of digging operations followed, with mock sales, imitations of the chief dealers, an

argument between Dutoitspan and New Rush—general foolery, in short. Dr. Treksteer was immensely interested. His wandering eyes fixed themselves and opened to their fullest. He could not examine the stones too closely: feeling them, counting their angles, weighing them in his hand, and inquiring their value. After this, it became more and more evident to me that the doctor wished to say something, and I vaguely guessed what it might be. But his timidity was not to be overcome till we had arrived within a very few days' sail of England. At length, one night, he said, whilst we were smoking alone on the poop, "Are you quite sure you would know a diamond, without the possibility of mistake?" This was spoken all in one breath, after long but agitated silence.

"Perfectly certain!" I replied briskly.

Another pause of hesitation—"They're hard to distinguish at night, aren't they?"

"Quality is hard to distinguish; but any child in Griqualand could tell a diamond from another stone in the dark."

He got up and hammered his pipe nervously on the taffrail. "I am afraid you'll think me an old fool," said the doctor.

"*Voyons donc!*" I answered. "A man is a fool who does not give himself a chance! If O'Reilly, the ostrich-hunter, had not ridden into Grahamstown with that pebble which he thought curious, Griqualand would still be a desert. I take it that you have some stones which you fancy to be diamonds. Hand them out, doctor, and I promise that no one shall ever hear of it."

He hesitated still. "I want to tell you how I got them—"

"All right!" I said. "But the story will be much more interesting if we know beforehand what to call these pretty things. Let us go and see them."

With evident misgivings he took me to his cabin, and produced an old Dutch desk of mahogany bound with brass. It was full of yellow papers, dried leaves, and rubbish of that kind which feeble old bachelors collect as they potter through existence.

After rummaging all over this desk a time or two, the doctor found a small leathern bag, which I had noticed at the first glance. Before opening it he made another attempt to explain the how and the why of his possessing he knew not what. But I took the bag from him, ruthlessly severed a very Gordian knot, and poured a bright little cascade of diamonds upon the upper bunk. The doctor's excitement was pitiful; he shook all over with anxiety. But there was no need to keep the poor old fellow in suspense. "These are the real thing," I said at once, "and of good water, apparently, though not large. They look like Bultfontein stones, but you have not been there. Where did you find them?"

"In the Transvaal, eight hundred miles from Bultfontein."

This was rather startling. Every one expected that new mines would be discovered in Griqualand; but it was a novel idea indeed that the "diamondiferous formation" stretched so far north. I became more eager to hear the story than was Treksteer to tell it. We mounted to the poop again, and there the doctor's tale was unfolded. I warn the reader that it is no fiction I am writing. To "make up" an adventure of the sort is so easy that I, for one, would not do it. Nor can I believe even now that my informant deceived me or himself on any point. But comment will be in place more fitting at the end.

Treksteer was a successful merchant in South America, until a revolution destroyed his stock, and the failure of some great house ruined his credit. At fifty years old he had to begin life once more, with very small resources in himself and none outside. His brother and partner returned to Holland; but he, dreading the climate, and wisely distrustful of his ability to make way amongst a hard race of men, chose to seek his fortune at the Cape. There he drifted straightway into tutorship, if one may so call the business. The Cape "schoolmaster" is an institution of the land. Where population is so scant and so far between, regular schools could not exist. The pedagogue is a circulating creature, who rides from farm to farm, taking his pupils in such order as he

can. Some boys receive an hour a week, some two, some a whole day, of his attention. In the wilder districts of the colony and the Free State a landowner must give his children the luxury of an entire tutor, so to speak, or send them to a distance. His wife would object to the latter course if he proposed it, and people who have not means to pursue the former see their sons grow up without knowledge or manners. They do not much regret it, perhaps. A boy can ride and shoot, raise stock and sell it, without learning, and that which has never been valued is not missed. But among wealthy boers, of whom there are many in the Transvaal, the schoolmaster is an officer of the household, as one may say. Though the farmer have no children, he still keeps a pedagogue to read and write his letters, to advise him in politics and social matters, and to amuse him with stories of the world beyond his farm. The schoolmaster, in fact, is half secretary, half steward, all servant. In a few embarrassed but pregnant words, Dr. Treksteer let me understand what humiliations, drudgery, and unkindness he had passed through in twenty years of this life. The Transvaal boer is a white Kaffir, raised above the savage in few respects, and in several he stands beneath. He despises the secretary, encouraging his children to do the like. But, at the same time, he flogs them with awful brutality upon complaint of idleness or bad behaviour, for he asks the full worth of his money. Blows are his resource for every trouble, and his reign is one of terror. His amusements are cards and drink, pot-hunting, and harrying his black neighbours.

Once a year the boers go out for a *battue* of game, in parties of half-a-dozen or more. Each has his great waggon, and sometimes two, with slaves and riding-horses. Not many years ago it would have seemed impossible to exhaust the Transvaal hunting-grounds, but murderous driving has thinned them. The most eager sportsman could satisfy himself any day, even now, but the boer looks upon the chase as a matter of business. He counts to fill his enormous waggon with horns and hides, nor will he give

himself much trouble in the doing of it. Consequently, he goes farther and farther afield every year when bent on one of these grand expeditions. The Kaffir chiefs, however, value their own game, and the sight of Dutch hunters is naturally hateful to them. Of late years they have begun to claim a tax upon each rifle, and they are certainly right in doing so. When the intruders are weak, they pay; when strong enough, they resist. Several wars have arisen upon such disputes.

In 1871 Treksteer was living with a rich boer by Leydenburg. At the proper season his master took unto him six kindred spirits for a grand *chasse*. Several "schoolmasters" attended. They tracked up the country northwards, passed the Crokodyl and the Sushi rivers, and began their hunting on the extreme border of the *tsetse* country. A chief of the Masele Kaffirs demanded his due of a pound a gun, but failed to get it. He ordered his people to give the invaders no assistance, but they took what they wanted, and shot as they pleased. Wandering just too far, however, they passed the fatal boundary, and lost a number of their oxen by "the fly." Bitterly vexed, they turned eastwards, recrossed the Sushi, and reached the territory of Emboonda, king of the Batsoetta Kaffirs. Here, lacking oxen and foreseeing difficulties, they thought it best to pay the game licence, and to make a present besides. But their proceedings towards the people were not less oppressive. Secure in the king's permission, they wandered freely through his lands. One evening, as they rode back to the waggons, a bushman slave picked up a pebble, which he examined with evident delight. A boer asked him the use of it, and he explained that with such stones his people pierced their digging knives of stone to fix a handle on them. The rumour of diamond discoveries had already spread to the Transvaal, but none of the party had seen a diamond. They knew, however, that it would bore stones, and on reaching camp this pebble was minutely scrutinized. All agreed that it looked like nothing familiar to their experience, and next day they revisited the spot. It was a marshy piece of

ground ; of that Dr. Treksteer is quite certain, but as to the locality he could only declare that it lay beyond the Sand river, and some two miles from the kraal of Feelipantze, a sub-chief under Emboonda. There are many lions in the neighbourhood.

A marsh is not the sort of ground in which an experienced digger would look for diamonds ; but if there be one fact proved in geology by the Cape discoveries, it is that we know nothing of the conditions under which a diamond may be expected. I have not the slightest doubt that Treksteer spoke the truth, and he says that his master and slaves picked up forty-two stones that day, of the same sort as those he showed me, and that the whole party gathered over a hundred and fifty. He himself, amongst fourteen, had the largest found—about four carats, as I judged. They averaged, perhaps, rather less than two carats. Much ponderous joking there was over the matter, and many *supjes* of “Cape Smoke,” so that when the sun grew hot all the boers went to sleep under a cameeldorn tree. A number of Kaffirs had assembled to observe these extraordinary proceedings. Through the slaves they learned what was going on, and a brawny fellow approached Treksteer, who still searched, though his eyes seemed burning in his head ;—what an overpowering motive was his to keep at it ! The Kaffir grinned in friendly style, and said, “They’re only little stones you find here ! Look at this !”

He touched a small roll of cotton hanging on his chest—he wore nothing else besides feathers—and pushed back the end of it. Treksteer saw something which shook his whole faith in the pebbles he had so laboriously collected. For the Kaffir exposed an angle, sharp and true as instrument could cut, glassy white, and shining in the sun’s rays like a star. He asked the Kaffir to unwind it wholly, but this the man refused to do, saying it was *fetish*, and never to be seen. His grandfather found it, and luck had followed the kraal ever since. Nothing would induce him to show, much more to part with it, but Treksteer might pass his fingers over the roll. He did so, and he declares that it was at

least an inch and a half diameter; the angles seemed to be all sharp and unbroken, so that the gem must have weighed five hundred carats at the lowest estimate. Treksteer could not believe in a diamond of this size, and sorrowfully concluded that fortune had once more betrayed him.

The boers woke up whilst this discussion proceeded, and came to the spot, yawning and stretching their huge limbs. *They* had felt no disappointments in life—nothing to make them distrust the Fates, especially when kind. They fell into fierce raptures over the stone—one offering a farm for it, another twelve span of oxen, a third fifty guns. This last proposal shook the Kaffir for a moment—we are telling of six years ago, when few grand chiefs owned fifty guns. But superstition outweighed cupidity, and he refused with firmness. The boers looked at one another. They had rifles and revolvers, fifty shots at least, and the Kaffirs round had only spears. Probably the man took alarm; he said, “What security have I for the fifty guns? You may take my fetish, and strike me dead with it. A great fetish it must be, or you would not offer so much money. Come, make me terms!” So they all sat under the cameeldorn and argued, the schoolmasters negotiating, of course. The shrewd Kaffir proposed that one should fetch the guns, whilst the rest remained with him. But this would not do, for the envoy must carry the fetish with him to ascertain its value, and not one of the boers would trust another to return. The debate continued till afternoon, and meanwhile group after group of Kaffirs came strolling to the spot without demonstration. The whole force of the kraal assembled gradually, each man with assegais and knobkerry. The boers were too much occupied to notice, until five hundred warriors or more squatted within range of them. Then Feelipantze rose up, and good-humouredly declined to make a bargain. The boers sprang to their feet with anger, and the Kaffirs did likewise. Each party looked the other in the face for a moment, the white men surprised, the negroes firm and ready, assegais perpendicularly

poised, shivering like reeds in a breath of summer wind. "My children have come to seek me," said Feelipantze; "now I will go with them." He shook hands all round, and marched across the *veldt*, his warriors behind him. A hundred yards away Feelipantze struck up his war-song in low grave tones; his followers took up the strain, and as they wound off into the distance they chanted it with the full power of their stout lungs. The boers have had reason to study each intonation of that threatening chorus, and they well understood the hint. Begun in a low key, and accompanied by no foaming dances, it meant a grave warning only, an indication that the Kaffirs stood upon their guard.

There was heated discussion in the boers' camp that night. Some of them proposed to storm the kraal, and kill these *verdommt skellums* without more ado; but others argued that the measure would be unjustifiable when they did not even know for certain that the fetish was a diamond. They would have to ride for it after such an act, abandoning teams, waggons, and all in them. How they would be laughed at in Pretoria if the object gained with such enormous loss should prove worthless! As for fifty guns, they could very well afford that as a speculation; but waggons and oxen and a full cargo of hides are matters much more serious. So it was resolved to visit the kraal next day, and accede to the Kaffir's terms. They would cast lots in a Bible which should take the diamond away, and the schoolmasters were set to draw a binding document which should assure all parties their rights.

Next day they called on Feelipantze. Intimate knowledge of the Kaffir customs told them at a glance that the tribe was alarmed. Cattle had vanished, and young children; whilst of fighting men scarcely one could be away. Feelipantze, however, was all politeness and good humour. He gave them Kaffir beer to drink, and allowed every one to see the corner of his amulet; but as for selling it, he was more resolved than ever to decline. And the boers, sobered by morning reflection, and rather startled

to see the chief's fighting force, did not try to bully him. But their confidence in the diamond so much increased, that they positively offered all the rifles of the party for it, to be there and then delivered over. Such temptation was never resisted by a Kaffir, and boer never proposed such an act of madness. But Feelipantze explained with frankness that he dared not part with his fetish. His own people would not allow it, and Emboonda, his suzerain, would certainly cut him into little bits for such an act of treason. Treksteer's patron, however, warmed by Kaffir beer, had an order written for fifty guns, directed it to his agent at Pretoria, and sent it by a mounted Hottentot there and then, spite of all assurances that it could do no good. But other troubles arose.

The chief possessed an otter-skin *kaross*, which hung over a cross-beam in his kraal. He possessed also a pretty daughter—a very pretty daughter, as Treksteer reports. One boer fell in love with the *kaross*, and one with the girl. Feelipantze was willing to part with either at his own price. But he asked three pounds—an ox, that is—for the *kaross*; the boer would give him no ox, and offered only two pounds in gold. Otter is the most valuable of all furs at the Cape. Excited by the previous discussion, and knowing himself to be prepared for events, the chief did not bargain with that deference thought becoming in a black man towards a boer. When two sovereigns were forced into his hand, he threw them angrily away, and one could not be found upon a search. Words grew very threatening indeed, the boer asking his sovereign or his *kaross*, the Kaffirs declaring that he himself had pocketed the coin. In the midst of this row a messenger forced his way through the crush, and told Feelipantze that a little son of his was tossed by a bull. The affection of Kaffirs for their children whilst young is almost exaggerated, and the chief forgot his anger on hearing such news. He remembered only the white man's fetish in healing, and begged its help. Treksteer had been brought up to medicine, and he offered to go at once, his master

raising no objection. Thereupon the party broke up, Feelipantze hurrying to the distant *kloof* where his son had met with this accident. Treksteer found the child bruised and shaken, but not hurt seriously. He stopped a day with him, however, finding several other cases that appealed to his kindly skill. Upon returning to the boers' camp he learned that the admirer of the otter-skin *kaross* had looted it in the confusion ; and so proud was this hero of his feat, that he wore the trophy upon all occasions. The natives said nothing, but they looked askance.

The Hottentot had taken with him two led horses, as is the custom when undertaking a long journey. He might be expected back in a fortnight at the latest, for he would travel very quick after reaching the settlements, where his horses could be exchanged from farm to farm. The boers resolved to await his return ; their waggons were loaded already, but nothing in particular called them home. Drink enough they had, and, besides, all were used to the intoxicating beverages of the Kaffir ; so they prepared for a time of idle jollity, such as Treksteer dreaded above every mood of his savage patrons. I can understand that they made this nervous old man their butt, and a butt has the "roughest" of all times in the Transvaal. Treksteer asked leave to visit his patients in the *kloof*, and his master gave him a week. The Kaffirs had not withdrawn their cattle or their families from the refuge—a sign that they did not think the danger past. The spot, of course, was naturally strong, such as boys and oldsters could defend with a reasonable hope of victory. But the space was not enough to feed some thousands of cattle, and very hard work it proved to keep the poor beasts alive. The boys would take out no more than a few hundreds at a time, though they howled to see their darling creatures get thinner day by day. A Kaffir loves his children, but his very soul is moved by the loss of an ox. Before the doctor's leave expired, still greater vigilance was introduced. Military order ruled, sentries were strengthened into pickets, and the garrison slept upon its arms. So Treksteer concluded that

his friends would be making a more jovial time of it than common. He himself received the kindest treatment, especially after it came out that he was not an Africander. The old chief who commanded told him again and again not to fear, for he had healed their sick, and Kaffirs never forgot a service. My friend's experience did not quite confirm the general principle, but he felt easy in this case.

Days passed by, and Treksteer's leave came to an end. Upon the morning fixed for his return he rose before daylight, but the camp had been long astir. When the doctor left his hut, he found that all the women had retired into the *kloof* itself. Up to this time they had lived in rude shanties just outside its mouth, trusting for safety to the sentinels who stood on each hill-top between their refuge and the kraal. But the fires were all grey beneath their ashes in that grey and chilly dawn. Not a soul answered to the doctor's shout. Rough walls, interlapping, guarded the *kloof*, and the space between—through which only entrance could be made—had been filled with thorn-bushes during the night. It would have been easy to scale the slopes on either hand, but Treksteer had seen too much of Kaffirs to attempt it. Low-lying mists hung there, and the coarse herbage was white as with frost. But through the steam and the untrodden grass fierce eyes were watching. So stealthily and noiselessly does the Kaffir begin war.

Treksteer knew what all this meant, before observing that his horse had been brought from the *veldt* and tethered by his door. The old men and women had not dared to warn him unauthorized. He mounted and rode away. A pale fresh light spread from the east. Presently, long streamers shot across the sky, descending rapidly. The sun rose, not misty as with us, but eager, thirsty, dazzling. Its beams licked his face like fire, and threw a long blue shadow that rode with him over the dew-white grass. Unmolested the doctor went, through lands utterly unpeopled to all seeming. But he knew his lonely course was

marked from eerie to eerie. Six or seven miles on the back-trail there was another *kloof* to traverse. A picket of warriors had its station there, as the doctor knew. All was still as he approached, but at the very entrance a Kaffir challenged him. He stopped dead, and presently appeared an under-chief, who turned the doctor back with kindly firmness. A young warrior accompanied him to the *kloof* he had quitted. No news could be drawn from chief or subaltern, but Treksteer guessed who the enemy might be. He rode back, not unconsolated, and upon due authority the refugees received him with hearty good-will.

Three or four days passed without alarm, and then Feelipantze arrived. Preparations began at once for breaking up the camp—not too soon, for the cattle were nearly starved. The chief felt a visible embarrassment in talking with his guest. He first denied any war at all, then made solemn oath that the white men had not been concerned in it. But not in vain had Treksteer passed twenty years in the wilderness. He laid his hand upon the Kaffir's diamond, and swore him by that great fetish. Feelipantze broke off in a rage and rode home, Treksteer following. Arrived at the kraal, he sought his friends' encampment, which had evidently been deserted many days. No signs of fight lay round. The waggon track ran northward, and Treksteer's experience told him that the camp had been shifted leisurely, without alarm. He did not think it prudent to follow, but returned to Feelipantze and asked information. The fencing and diplomacy, not to mention the lying, on both sides, I cannot tell, but it lasted a matter of ten days, and no doubt was most ingenious. In the end, Treksteer made a desperate resolution. He "swore" Emboonda's life upon his vassal's fetish. No Kaffirs were present, or such treason would have cost the life of both. Feelipantze, his eyes starting, and grey with superstitious fear, asked what the doctor wanted. To recover his own effects, and no more, had Treksteer set this awful machinery in movement. And Feelipantze promised to let him have them.

This story was told me in the dark, upon the poop of the good ship *Mersey*, homeward bound from the Cape. The doctor gave it in a language unfamiliar, without graces of style, and in tones hurried and nervous. I had lately gone through adventures of my own, and each of our comrades gambling in the saloon below could have recounted some strange experience. We were rather *blasé* with that sort of thing in the Diamond Fields. But the next chapter of the doctor's tale thrilled me. I had been impatient for its end, burning to ask more details about the situation of that marsh. But I had not expected a catastrophe so dramatic.

Treksteer and the chief went alone next day. An hour's ride brought them to a solitary hill, a *lost kop*, as boers would say. Skirting it, they came upon a little lake, surrounded by trees. Soon afterwards the waggon-track was hit, and then, suddenly, a thorn-fence rose before them. It ran betwixt trees and water. Feelipantze made a gesture, signifying, What you want lies there! —and sat upon the ground. Treksteer went on, looking for an entrance. The chief called, and gave him an axe hanging to his own waist-belt. The doctor knew then what lay inside the fence. He cut a gap. Under trees beyond he saw the big waggons standing. Advancing towards them, a vile stench filled his nostrils. Presently he kicked a skeleton in the long grass, then another. Vultures had done their work and gone. Some of the oxen lay tumbled in their tracks, some had fallen headlong in the act of galloping. Human remains here were all negro. Going on, the doctor reached a hut of sticks and branches. Here the boers lay, all seven, with the assegais still traversing their fleshless ribs. Treksteer identified his master, pinned to the earth by a spear. Not boers only did he find, but their luckless schoolmasters, all dead and rotting. The guns of the party stood round a tree. No resistance had been made. As they sat round a fire, the Kaffirs had stolen up to them, and killed every man with one flight of assegais. Then they murdered the slaves, and even the cattle.

Amongst the bodies Treksteer recognized with shuddering disgust one not belonging to his party—a small, slight shape—a girl's. Further clue to the tragedy he never gained, but that is enough for one who knows both boer and Kaffir.

Nothing had been taken or touched in the waggons. Treksteer found his effects, packed them, and left the dreadful scene. Feelipantze sat outside the gap, crooning his war-song. Before they departed he motioned Treksteer to make up the hole; and then, clutching his assegais in one hand and his fetish in the other, he led the way silently towards home. "And so the place remains to this day!" concluded the doctor.

"Did you not give information at Pretoria?" I asked.

"Why should I bring war upon these poor creatures?" he replied. "They had provocation enough. Besides, I have not passed through Pretoria. The same night our Hottentot returned, bringing me a letter. My brother offered me a home in Holland, and I am on my way to him."

"They killed the Hottentot?"

"Of course!"

So the doctor finished. I took from him such topographical information as he could give, and obtained his promise to communicate with friends of mine in Amsterdam. He never did so. Using such clues as we had, some gentlemen joined with me in seeking Feelipantze, but without success. Emboonda we discovered easily; but no such kraal as that described. The king lost his temper on being pressed, and our messengers returned. Their belief was that Feelipantze had been murdered for the sake of his fetish. Perhaps he made a difficulty in surrendering it. No Kaffir chief, by this time, is ignorant of the value of a diamond, and Emboonda would be backed by all his tribe in declaring it treason for a vassal to possess such a king of stones.

THE DARK DAYS OF MONTANA.

To know the depth of crime possible for human wickedness, and the maximum of outrage which human nature will tolerate before resisting, is no useless information. I have just picked up a little volume which contains valuable evidence upon this point. It deals neither with Bulgarians nor Poles, but treats of a time so close to ours as 1863-4, and with Americans. Professor Dimsdale, of Virginia City, has written a "Correct and Impartial Narrative of the Chace, Trial, Capture, and Execution of Henry Plummer's Road Agent Band" by the Vigilantes of Montana in three years, which are still known as the "dark days" of the territory. He does not conceal that he himself had his "number" amongst the Linchers, confident that the recital of the misdeeds which stirred them to activity will justify his share in the proceedings. And it does so. There is a point at which the hideous changes to the monstrous, and holds us with a shuddering ascination. Wickedness becomes an awful study, when carried to the devilish lengths which Henry Plummer's band attained. Long after these events, the jurymen of the Grand Inquest at Montana deliberately "presented" their opinion that "offenders should be left to the Committee, who always acted impartially, and who would not permit the escape of proved criminals on technical and absurd grounds," as in a certain case given. This presentment justifies alike the institution of the Vigilante force, and the system it pursued.

Bannack City, in the territory of Montana, was founded by John White, in July, 1862; in December, he it stated parenthetically, the œkist was murdered by Charley Kelly, against whom no proceedings were taken. Virginia City, the present capital, started about the same time, upon the strength of wondrous "diggings" in Alder Gulch. Many camps of the neighbourhood were older than these two, and before men collected together in a township, robbers and murderers had their fling uncontrolled. Unless taken red-handed in some very brutal assault, or, which was more serious, in an attack on property, they escaped the punishment of misdeeds by riding to the next camp or digging. Some idea may be formed of a state of things beyond all European experience by the sworn testimony that 102 bodies *found* were those of men killed by twenty-one individuals, who paid the penalty between December 21st, 1863, and February 4th, 1864. They represented, as is thought, scarcely half the assassinations committed by these white Thugs.

A few anecdotes of the earlier time preface the history. Taking as an epoch the arrival of Henry Plummer, Professor Dimsdale picks an incident here and there between that event and the nomination of the same arch-fiend to the Shrievalties of Bannack and Virginia—another grand date. Plummer had killed a man in Orofino, and passed through Montana on his way to the civilized East. By a chance desperately unlucky for many honest fellows, he missed the boat, and, whilst waiting, he came across Jack Cleveland, a former comrade of the road. Plummer was persuaded to stop, undertaking some wood contracts in partnership with Cleveland. But they fell out over a young lady whom the former married afterwards. Neither was willing to leave his comrade within reach of her, and they travelled in company to Bannack, arriving, apparently, in January, 1863. On the way, Cleveland told various people that Plummer was "his meat," an awful expression which signified the resolve to murder him. They had neither money nor credit on reaching Bannack, but Cleve-

land went out and shot George Evans at sight, plundering him of a considerable sum. The body was found with a bullet-hole through the arm-pit, showing that the poor wretch had raised his arm in deprecation, seeing a man about to shoot. Thereafter, Cleveland went to a drinking-saloon, and met Jeff. Perkins, who had once owed him money. He demanded payment, though the debt had been settled long ago. Perkins proved this, and Cleveland said, "Well, if it's settled, it's all right;" but all the time he kept his hand on his revolver. Plummer chanced to be present, and he interfered on Perkins's behalf. That prudent gentleman went home for his pistols, whilst Cleveland boasted that he was a chief, that he was afraid of no one, and that he would be "even" with some of those fellows from the other side. Plummer sprang up, exclaiming, with an oath, "I'm tired of this!" and began to shoot. His second bullet brought Cleveland to his knees, and he, grasping wildly for his pistol, cried out, "You won't shoot a man when he's down!" Plummer drew back; but as the wretch staggered to his feet, he shot twice, mortally wounding him. George Ives and Reeves, both destined to hang with their chief, grasped each an arm of the assassin, and paraded him triumphantly about the streets. A man was being shaved in the saloon whilst this "difficulty" proceeded. It is recorded that the barber neither stopped his operations, nor cut his customer.

A certain Hank Crawford took compassion on the wounded man whom nobody else dared touch. For he was still alive, and could tell secrets which to be only suspected of hearing meant death. Though several times pressed by Plummer, Crawford persisted that nothing had been told him. Nevertheless, he was marked for assassination. Unexpected events delayed action for a time. George Ives, before mentioned, had a quarrel in the street with George Carrhart. Each ran into a neighbouring shanty for his revolver, and Ives was first prepared. But he looked for his enemy in the wrong direction, giving Carrhart a chance to shoot him in the back, which was generously refused.

When Ives turned, a very lively fusillade began, which lasted until this hero, having fired all his shots, turned to seek a fresh pistol. Thereupon Carrhart put a ball into his back. After this the men became devoted friends. A day or two afterwards, two gentlemen of standing camped on Grasshopper Creek with their wives. As they sat, a bullet came whizzing through the midst of the party, so close that one gentleman's ear tingled uncomfortably for a day or two afterwards. Cyrus Skinner had played off this jest, taking the party for Indians. Some of these, belonging to the Sheepcator tribe, were encamped on Yankee Flat. Charley Reeves, before mentioned, had a quarrel with one of them. He and Moore entered Goodrich's saloon one morning, armed with double-barrelled shot-guns and a brace of revolvers each. They announced an intention to "set the ball a-rolling," and, going round the house, they sent a volley into the Indian camp, wounding one man. After refreshment at the bar, these miscreants sallied out again, in company with William Mitchell and two others unidentified. Concentrating their fire, they killed, in one shot, a Frenchman named Brissette, the Indian chief, a lame boy, and a baby. Wounds were not numbered, but John Barnes escaped with a broken thumb, and Woods never recovered a bullet in the groin. These white men had run up to ask what the row was about. Upon learning their injuries, Moore remarked that it served them right for being where they had no business.

This outrage stirred the town, which did considerable business with Indians. Plummer, Reeves, Moore, and Mitchell were arrested, but the former got off at once, upon proof of Cleveland's threats. Mitchell was sentenced to banishment, but he never left the town. What interest there was in this foolish and abortive trial centred upon Moore and Reeves. No officials of Government interfered, of course. The accusation was decreed at a mass-meeting of citizens, and proceedings followed with the pedantic ceremony characteristic of Americans in public. At first a counsel for the prosecution could not be found, and when

a Mr. Copley undertook the case, *in extremis*, he broke down. A strange gentleman, Mr. Hoyt, consented to act as judge, and Hank Crawford, our old acquaintance, was elected sheriff. A very few minutes showed to the satisfaction of honest men that no honourable jury could be collected in Bannack or Virginia. Accordingly, they sent to Godfrey's Cañon, where Langford, Knox, Godfrey, and others, respectable working men, were engaged in the building of a saw-mill. These came with a readiness and courage worthy of admiration, but one only, Langford, dared to vote the death penalty. The remaining eleven found a verdict of "guilty," but recommended banishment and confiscation for the prisoners. The fact is that a reign of terror had commenced. Plummer's friends swaggered about the court, threats in mouth and pistol on thigh, daring the jury to find the verdict which their conscience approved. And they gave way. It will be remarked that regular and constituted authorities are not so much as named all through this affair.

Hank Crawford had given so much the more offence to Plummer by acting as sheriff in this trial. Plummer was not yet the accepted chief of all villains in the territory, but he already took upon himself the charge of their general interest. He saw his way to successful murder when Crawford attempted to recover his expenses as sheriff by the sale of Cleveland's property. Lying in wait at the Bakery, Plummer met his man, and picked a quarrel. But Crawford had friends with him, and each friend had a pistol. Plummer said it was a mistake, and walked off. Next day he sent a message, declaring that Crawford's friendship was the one exclusive aim of his existence, and, after a time, they were brought together on the basis of brotherhood.

Within a very few hours Crawford discovered what a rogue's fraternity is worth. Whilst he talked with an acquaintance who had been fighting, a stranger came up and asked what the row was about. Crawford told him to mind his own business, whereupon the stranger challenged him to a fight with pistols, though

he had none visible. Crawford offered to fight with fists ; the other agreed, and stepped back into a dark corner, Crawford, meanwhile, chivalrously disarming. The unknown scoundrel straightway levelled a revolver, but Crawford, seizing him by throat and wrist, wrested it away. Plummer appeared suddenly, bent on murder, but others also came, ready to stand by their friend. It appeared afterwards that Plummer's gang stood round the doorway armed with shot-guns, waiting till Crawford should be enticed outside. After this failure three separate ambushes were laid for the ex-sheriff, which he escaped. Next week, Bill Hunter tried his prowess, calling upon Crawford with the accusation of some unfriendly words. The latter answered "right out," stating that he knew what Hunter wanted ; upon which that hero vanished. The Sunday following, Plummer tried to get up a quarrel between Crawford and a certain George Parkins ; failing therein, he challenged both to fight. Parkins frankly declared himself a coward, and left the matter between those others. Hank Crawford replied that he was afraid of no man, following Plummer very close towards the street. Outside the door, this ruffian exclaimed, "Now pull your pistol." Hank refused, saying, "I never pulled pistol on a man, and you'll not be the first. But I'll fight you any other way." Plummer said, "If you don't pull your pistol, I'll shoot you like a sheep !" Hank laid a hand upon his shoulder, and replied, fixing him with his eyes, "If that's what you want, the quicker you do it the better !" and so, turning round, walked off. Plummer dared not shoot an enemy in the back, and thus Crawford escaped for the time. But he knew his death resolved, and, going home, took his double-barrelled gun, intending to seek Plummer and kill him at sight. That gentleman understood the state of things in just the same sense, and circled round with a like idea. But they did not chance to meet, and next afternoon Plummer sent an embassy, declaring that he wished no harm. If Crawford would never address him, he would never speak, and thus an eternal silence might keep peace



between them. Honest Hank replied that he was not a fool. One or other "had to die or go."

On this a friend arrived, warning the ex-sheriff that a house opposite was occupied by Plummer's gang, who waited to shoot him on the first chance. He kept away from his door in consequence, and the silent death-struggle went on forty-eight hours. Both parties wanted to finish. At noon on the day of fate, Crawford walked across his street, unarmed, to take a "dish of coffee" offered by a charitable soul in the next block. Whilst drinking, he saw Plummer prowl along, with his gun at the "ready," hoping for a shot. A friend, whose name is registered Frank Ray, brought Crawford a rifle; and without any words at all he shot, breaking Plummer's arms. Thus the matter ended for that time. Plummer sent a challenge at fifteen days' date to meet him with pistol and knife, but Crawford felt too sure of his aim to heed the brag. Two days after, George Carrhart came suspiciously close. Crawford, with his usual pluck, anticipated the villain. "Now, George," he said, "you had better go slow!" At the same moment a friend arrived, who, perceiving the state of matters, pushed close to Carrhart, and stood guard over his pistol. Upon which, Carrhart asked explanations, avowing that his own object had been murder. Learning the cause of quarrel between Plummer and Crawford, he threw his coat open, displaying the ready pistol, and announced himself a friend for ever. Carrhart thus failing the gang, a party of "citizens" came from up town to do the work, but they missed their victim. Thereupon, Crawford's allies offered to seize Plummer and hang him; but that gallant fellow said he would take care of himself. A few days afterwards he started on horseback for Fort Benton. Three ruffians followed, but never overtook him, and so he safely escaped from the land of gold.

All who had been prominent in the trial of Moore and Reeves were persecuted in this way. Some received cruel ill-treatment, others were driven from the country. The tale of Langford's

escapes and troubles is almost as painful as Crawford's. Robberies, murders, and attempts at murder formed the daily news of Bannack. Men shot for sport, and robbed for existence. Nobody interfered. If magistrates there were at that time, we hear nothing of them. The only judge named served as confederate to the highwaymen. But Montana was no desert. Its abounding wealth tempted and shielded the gang, for it made robbery profitable, whilst engrossing the whole attention of honest men. No wayfarer so ragged but he might be great plunder; no outrage so atrocious that a man should leave his business to avenge it.

When the desperadoes, flocking from all parts, had gathered themselves together round Bannack, they chose a captain, Henry Plummer, lieutenants, a secretary, executive agents, "outsiders," receivers, and spies. Their head-quarters lay at Rattlesnake Creek, where, in sheds of brushwood, or "wake-ups," some members of the company were always to be found. Near by stood a sign-post, at which they practised shooting. In this exercise Plummer had no rival, until Crawford's ball injured his wrist. He could draw a pistol, and fire all the shots, in three seconds. After that luckless attempt at murder, he tried hard to reach equal skill with his left hand, but never quite succeeded. At his death the bullet was still embedded amongst the bones of his right wrist, polished with friction. As soon as matters had been so far brought into a system that the "outsiders" could be relied on to tell when a coach or a traveller was setting out with cash; when the spies had arranged a code of private marks and signals, by which the vehicle or horses bore their own news of booty to be won; when the highwaymen, or executive, had been taught to keep certain beats, where they could be found when wanted;—then Plummer decided to make sure of his retreat, as one may say. The obvious course was to get himself appointed thief-catcher magistrate. This also he contrived, thanks to the apathy of honest men at Bannack, who could not find one of

themselves to undertake the duty. The utmost they would do was to name Dillingham as one deputy, whilst Plummer secured the election of Buck Stinson, Jack Gallagher, and Ned Ray, for the other posts. Having thus succeeded at Bannack, he sent word to the Sheriff of Virginia City that he could find time to serve that office also. The sheriff hastily resigned, under fear of assassination, and so the robber-chief became magistrate in both towns.

Some allege that Henry Plummer was of English birth; others declare him of "Boston raising." He first came before the public at Nevada City, California, in 1853, when he started the Empire Bakery. Of winning address, and most gentlemanly manners, he was everywhere a favourite. Three years after his arrival he was chosen Marshal of Nevada, was re-elected next year, and received a Democratic nomination for the Assembly. But Plummer was a man *à bonnes fortunes*. Wherever he went he found "victims." His first murder known was that of a German, with whose wife he had an intrigue. The husband found them together, and was shot instantly. For this crime Plummer was sentenced to ten years' penal servitude, but friends obtained him a pardon, on the plea that he was consumptive. Returning to Nevada City, he started the Bakery again, but soon fell into trouble for an assault. He then crossed to Washoe, joined a gang of "road agents," and took an active part in the attempted robbery of Well's and Fargo's bullion express. For this he was tried and acquitted. Once more setting up in Nevada, he shot a man, was lodged in jail, and bribed the keeper to let him escape. A comrade, named Mayfield, stabbed Sheriff Blackburn to the heart, and Plummer, repeating his tactics, got the villain out, and started with him for Oregon. At Walla Walla he enticed a man's wife away, aided by Talbert, who was killed by the pursuers at Idaho. Plummer stole a horse and escaped once more, going to Orofino, where he straightway shot the keeper of a dancing-saloon. Threatened for this crime, he decided to go eastwards, but

stopped in Montana, as has been told. Such is the astounding record of the Sheriff of Bannack and Virginia, chief of the most desperate highwaymen and assassins whereof modern history keeps account.

Dillingham stood in the way. Not only was he honest in a degree, he also knew the scoundrels associated with him as deputies. Hearing that a man intended to travel from Bannack to Virginia, he warned him that Buck Stinson, Haze Lyons, and Charley Forbes meant to rob him on the way. The foolish fellow mentioned this fact, and Dillingham's death was instantly resolved. The three came upon him at Virginia. Stinson walked past, Haze took a post beside him, and Forbes came behind. "Bring him along!" cried Stinson, over his shoulder. They walked about ten paces, when all three faced upon the doomed man. "Take back those lies!" Haze exclaimed, and all three shot. It was Forbes's bullet which proved immediately fatal. Jack Gallagher, the fourth deputy, was "on hand," and he arrested his friends with proper ceremony, taking their pistols, and reloading them, so that nobody should tell whose revolver had been fired.

The murder of a deputy sheriff by his mates was a crime unusual even in Montana. The people assembled. It was put and argued before them whether they should delegate their supreme powers of justice to twelve men, or should sit upon the jury *en masse*. After a vote by ayes and nays, which failed to satisfy, two waggons were drawn up, and the advocates of each form of trial passed between them. Upon counting, it was found that a judicious fear of the brigand sheriff had caused the greater number to vote a multitudinous court. They knew that Plummer would empanel a jury of his friends. Three doctors were named judges, a blacksmith undertook the prosecution, Judge H. P. A. Smith acted for the defence, as always, and the whole body of miners sat upon the jury. The seat of justice was a wagon, and the "box" was Alder Gulch. At evening the court adjourned. Six trusty men took charge of the prisoners, who refused to be

chained until the guard levelled their rifles at them. In the night, Haze Lyons sent for a leading citizen, who approached, under cover of the guns. Said Haze, "I am the man who killed Dillingham. I came over to do it, and these men are innocent. I was sent here by the best men in Bannack to do it." He named some of the foremost citizens, as those who incited him, and added, "Henry Plummer told me to shoot him." After breakfast the trial was resumed, and at midday a verdict of "Guilty" was submitted by the people. The question of punishment occupied less time, for the whole crowd shouted "Hang them!" Straightway a scaffold was erected and graves dug. Forbes, however, got an acquittal, though he was guiltiest of the three. Judge Smith, his counsel, fell upon the ruffian's neck, and kissed him, crying, "My boy, my boy!" All the miners pressed round to congratulate, for Forbes was a "splendid-looking fellow, straight as a ramrod, brave and agile as a cat in his movements. His friends believed that he excelled Plummer in quickness and dexterity at handling his revolver. He had his scabbard sewn to his belt, and wore the buckle always exactly in front, so that his hand might grasp the butt with the forefinger on the trigger and thumb on the cock, with perfect certainty, whenever it was needed, which was pretty often." When the mob had finished with their congratulations, a waggon came to take this hero's friends to the gallows. A number of women had assembled meantime.

With the criminals got into the cart their mourning associates. Straightway a desperate row began, the women crying and demanding mercy, the friends haranguing. One of them moved that "the letter which Haze had written to his mother might be read." It was carried, and then everybody knew that the tragedy had changed into a farce. Seizing the moment, Judge Smith demanded a fresh vote, which also was accorded. After an indecisive trial by ayes and noes, it was decreed that those for hanging should walk up the hill, and those for acquittal should

walk down. This also was pronounced uncertain. For a third vote two pairs of men were chosen, between whom the opposing parties should walk. An honest Irish miner who had given his voice for justice, suddenly exclaimed, "There's a naygur has voted three times already for lettin' of 'em off!" The black fellow ran at that word, and amidst roars of laughter, Gallagher sprang up, pistol in hand, and shouted, "Let them go! They're cleared!" In the confusion twice confounded that arose, one of the prisoners jumped from the cart upon a horse, his comrade followed, and off they set full gallop. This mockery of justice ended with the burial of Dillingham. Only eight or ten people gathered round the grave, at which Judge Smith, weeping profusely, made a long oration on his knees. The secret of his lengthy eloquence was discovered when the bystanders found that he could not trust himself to rise.

After this affair, any lingering respect for human life, or any wholesome fear of retribution, vanished utterly from Montana. In town or camp a man was equally unsafe. The roads were deserted after nightfall, and wounded men lay about the streets almost unnoticed. It is to be particularly observed that these ruffians committed crime not for plunder alone but for mere sport. If a poor wretch had not money enough to satisfy the highwayman, he was shot. If his face or his appearance displeased, he was shot. In the blackest era of the middle ages, human ferocity did not rage with such madness. But I have told crimes enough to show the state of things. There is no necessity to repeat a monotonous record of stage-coach robberies, assassinations, and "miscellaneous shootings." The time of reckoning had come. In despair of finding justice either from authority or from the people, a few resolute souls in Bannack and Virginia decided to right themselves. Their first judgment was executed upon George Ives, a terrible villain. Like most of his comrades he was young, and not without education. Six feet high, of fine complexion, fair-haired, and blue-eyed, he always produced a favourable im-

pression. Ives had great spirits, and marvellous composure in peril. He did not know fear, and his tiger-like playfulness made him dreaded by all the gang. The record of particular crime which drew upon him vengeance is almost too astounding for belief. Remark that it deals with no more than the *last few days* of his life.

Returning from a visit to some of his comrades in Brown's Gulch, Ives met Anton M. Holter, and ordered him to stand. On finding very little cash, he read his victim a short lecture upon the impropriety of travelling with so small a sum. After this, Ives levelled at his head, and cut the scalp. A second shot, more deliberate, failed through the badness of the cap. Thereupon he rode carelessly away. A man had been sentenced to be flogged for petty larceny at Nevada, and, to escape punishment, he offered to confess the secret signs, &c., of the road agents, or highwaymen. Ives heard of this, and, going out, found the man, at broad daylight, between Virginia and Dempsey. He fired at once with buckshot, but a coat very thickly padded saved the traitor's life for a moment. Drawing his revolver, Ives shot him dead. This took place on the high road, in view of two houses, and several teamsters. The murderer rode to George Hilderman's, and asked shelter for a day or two, as he had killed a man near Cold Spring Rancho. One more outrage, and the measure was full. Nicholas Ibalt, a German of excellent character, sold some mules, received the money, and went to drive them in from pasture. He never returned, for George Ives, meeting him on the road, shot him at sight, and took both money and mules. Ten days afterwards a sportsman killed a grouse, which fell upon the hidden body. The circumstances of the discovery, the good character of the murdered man, and the unjust suspicions which had been expressed when he failed to bring up the mules, combined to give especial interest to this case. When the body reached Nevada, action was resolved by the corps of Vigilantes just established. Taking advantage of the

public indignation, they gathered twenty-five men whom they could trust, swore them to secrecy, and set out at 10 p.m. It was a bitter night. At half-past three in the morning, they crossed Wisconsin Creek, which was frozen, but not so hard as to bear a horse's weight. Fording at different points, some of the cattle stuck fast, and several Vigilantes were nearly drowned. A mile further on, the leader called a halt, and each man stood motionless and silent in his frozen clothes for an hour and a half, with the bridle in his hand. At the first peep of dawn they mounted, and at sight of the robbers' den they broke to right and left, surrounding it. Eight or ten ruffians lay asleep round the camp-fire, Long John, who was wrongly suspected, among them. All vehemently protested their innocence, but whilst they talked, one of the stolen mules walked towards the party. Upon this second manifestation of "God's revenge against murder," Long John denounced Ives, who came forward cheerfully, and rode back with his captors. Seven dragoon and army revolvers, nine shot-guns, and thirteen rifles were taken. Ives chatted so lightly and agreeably that every one acquitted him beforehand. On the way, prisoners and Vigilantes amused themselves with racing—an incident which shows alike the criminal's talent and the simplicity of these amateur constables. Ives took his opportunity, of course, and ran for it. Two hours' hard gallop were needed to recapture him. He would certainly have escaped had not the pursuers come upon some stray mustangs, which they mounted. Ives showed himself full of fun and spirits when overtaken. He insisted upon treating everybody, but for all his pleasant manners they set him in a hollow square this time, and so journeyed to Nevada. After hot debate, "the people assembled" gave a vote to defer his trial till next day. Lieutenant George Lane, meanwhile, galloped all night towards Bannack, changing his horse at each robber *rendezvous*, spreading the intelligence of Ives's danger, and bearing an accumulated appeal for "Plummer to the rescue!" Next day fifteen hundred men had

assembled in Nevada City, some to do their best against justice, but the enormous majority to see justice done. We need not detail the events that followed. Every trick of law was exhausted by Judge Smith, the brigand's advocate, and every form of violence was threatened upon members of the court and jury. It grew very late before a verdict could be delivered, in face of interruptions and delays of all kinds. At length, twenty-three jurors out of twenty-four voted death. An effort to adjourn execution till next day was defeated by Col. Sanders, who climbed on a waggon and moved that "George Ives be forthwith hanged." To action quick as this, people were not yet accustomed. It took the brigands by surprise, it delighted honest men. Nothing remained for the former but open violence, and the Vigilantes stood prepared. With guns at the ready they surrounded their prisoner, and none of the roaring, surging crowd dared fire the revolver he brandished. There was a brilliant moon, and an enormous bonfire, to light the scene. The execution took place in a house but partly built. All the roofs round were thick with men, shouting for death or threatening vengeance. The chief of the Vigilantes, undaunted, gave a loud command, "Men! do your duty!" Their pieces flashed in the moonlight, as they came to the "Present," menacing in all directions. The crowd turned and ran, falling one upon another in panic. And amidst the uproar, George Ives ceased to live. He perished, as did nearly all the gang, with perfect unconcern.

This first act of the Vigilantes bears date December 21st, 1863. They wasted no time. Erastus Yager and Brown were hung January 4th following. Six days more, and Henry Plummer, Ned Ray, and Buck Stinson paid the penalty. The captain of the gang had disregarded Ives's appeal. With that quickness of perception which had raised him to foul eminence, he saw that times had changed, and resistance had become impossible. With his deputies, Stinson and Ray, he prepared to escape; but the Vigilantes recognized his horses as they were brought up, and instantly

took action. Plummer they arrested in his bedroom, Stinson at an evening party, and Ray asleep upon a gambling-table. There was no question of trial for these arch-villains; the Vigilantes took them straightway to the place of execution. Plummer recognized their captain, whom he knew very well, and, approaching his horse, besought mercy. X——, as he was called, gave the answer: "It is useless to beg for your life. That affair is settled, and cannot be altered. You are to be hanged. You can't feel harder about it than I do; but I cannot help it if I would." Ray tried fighting, and Stinson blasphemed without intermission; Plummer alone asked mercy, and when it was refused, upon any terms, broke down. On his knees, with hysterical weeping, he declared himself too wicked to die; but those who heard his monstrous confession, shuddering, pronounced him too wicked to live. In spite of all evidence, a young man whom Plummer had befriended would not be convinced. In an agony of grief he threw himself upon the ground, weeping and wailing. Plummer tossed him the kerchief off his neck as a souvenir, and died.

A mere list of the other deeds of justice carried out by the Montana Vigilantes will fitly close this record. Dutch John and Joe Pizanthia were hung at Bannack, January 11th; Lieutenant George Lane, Frank Parish, Haze Lyons, Jack Gallagher, and Boone Helm at Virginia City, January 14th; Stephen Marsland, at Big Hole Rancho, January 16th; William Bunton, at Deer Lodge Valley, January 19th; Cyrus Skinner, Aleck Carter, John Cooper, and Robert Zachary, at Hell Gate, January 25th; William Shears, at Frenchtown, January 24th; Whiskey Bill, at Fort Owens, January 26th; William Hunter, at Gallatin Valley, February 3rd. Many of these names have already occurred in our narrative. Charley Forbes was mortally wounded in a scuffle, and his comrades, Moore and Reeves, shot him when tired of waiting for his death. All the other desperadoes suddenly fled to parts unknown. Judge Smith and J. Thurmond, counsel to the road agents, were banished. The latter brought an action at Salt Lake

City against Mr. Fox, the Vigilante sheriff, for aiding and abetting his expulsion. It was ultimately withdrawn.

So ended the "dark days of Montana," an epoch which will live eternally in Western memories. In six weeks, X—— and his resolute friends broke up the most powerful and the most atrocious confederacy that has been formed in modern times. The Committee then dissolved, but upon sufficient provocation it can always be resuscitated. Once or twice the Vigilantes have found it needful to turn out once more, and they still are ready. The knowledge of that fact keeps peace and property safe in Montana, from men who scorn law and despise police. He must be very prejudiced, indeed, who denies that Lynch law was justifiable under the state of things we have described. The fact stands certain—that Montana honours her Vigilantes as the subjects of Augeas honoured Heracles.

THE BULGARIANS.

THERE is many a savage race, of manners more or less disagreeable, amongst whom a traveller may pass his time pleasantly, and who will leave upon his mind recollections amusing if not instructive. The Bulgar is not of these. To one visiting the country before late events took place, when the names now so painfully familiar were strange even to Lord Macaulay's school-boy, when nobody had a word to say, good or bad, about the people, the Bulgar must have been well-nigh intolerable; but I made his acquaintance under no such favourable conditions. For months past he had been described daily as a modern representative of the blameless Ethiopian. There were different estimates of Russ or Turk; but a few persons who spoke very loud had persuaded everybody that the Bulgar was a persecuted innocent. This was an axiom with all parties, which to dispute stamped a man as an "unspeakable," or worse.

All who went to the scene of operations held this idea with more or less of faith, as how should they not? Even the Magyars, who know and hate the Serb, spoke of the Bulgar with a certain respect. His alleged misfortunes forbade them to doubt the virtue which was claimed for him by people who professed to know. This frame of mind lasted till the crossing of the Danube; then, but not suddenly, it diminished on all sides until, sentiment and dogma yielding to eye witness, with one accord the correspondents of the whole European press simultaneously denounced

the imposture. The least violent were the Russians. They felt, indeed, more bitterly than the rest, but prudence forbade them to shock too abruptly the prejudices of their countrymen. It may be disagreeable for those who so hotly took his part to confess that the Bulgar is a most unworthy hero ; but for the Russian to admit so much would have been to accuse his Government of ignorance or ambition, discreditable alike, and to tell his fellow-countrymen that their blood was wasting in a stupid cause. In spite of these considerations the truth was too obvious and too offensive to be suppressed ; but not until the correspondence of officers began to be published did Russian journalists venture to tell all they saw. Things as bad as any I shall set down have been said by the official friends of the Bulgar.

It is commonly believed among the learned that the inhabitants of Bulgaria are not Slavs by blood, though they speak a language more close to Russian than is broad Lancashire to Cockney. The surrounding Slavs imposed their speech upon them ; but it is curious, if this theory be true, that the Bulgar dialect should differ from the Russian less than does the Serb, from which again it is quite distinct. In appearance also the three kindred tribes are unlike. The Serb is very tall and big, with high bony features, and a martial air, most amusingly deceptive. The Muscovite needs no description now. The Bulgar is of middle height, very strongly built, but round-shouldered. His features are lumpish, complexion nearly always fair in childhood, but darkening as he grows up. Flaxen hair seems to be uncommon in men or women, but one cannot speak with certainty, because soap and water would make a difference. The ugliness of the population is really surprising. Children, pretty as any in the world are common, but as they grow out of childhood their features swell, their figures flatten or develope in wrong places, and they assume the sullen look of their progenitors. I never saw a good-looking woman amongst the peasantry, and very, very seldom in the towns—so seldom that one could not but suspect

a strain of foreign blood. At Tirnova, on the happiest day of its existence, when the whole population appeared to meet the Grand Duke, Russian officers were offended to observe not a pretty girl in all the crowd. They thought that jealous husbands and over-anxious parents kept them from sight. It was not so at all; the pretty girls did not show because they do not exist.

The relations of a Bulgar with his family are those usual amongst savages. The mother of his children has a great deal of influence, as she deserves to have, but much more than her share of labour is imposed upon her. In the field one sees the women doing the hardest work, while the man drives his oxen, or loads his cart. Amongst the endless train of fugitives who toiled through the Schipka Pass, the males commonly rode ahead unencumbered, while the women dragged afoot through the dust, bending beneath their loads. These, from the other side the Balkans, are decidedly a higher race, with faces more open, and finer features; but the comfort which they are said to have enjoyed was not visible in the specimens of household gear they carried with them.

I do not mean, however, to dispute that the Bulgars, men as well as women, are industrious. If one do not accord them that virtue, their case is desperate indeed. They work as no other people work, with a conscience, an obstinacy, a pitiless disregard for human weakness outrivalling the Chinese by far. Many a time have I observed a family at work by the roadside, hoeing maize or reaping, of which not a member looked up while we passed by, though Nicholas Nicholaevitch rode at our head, with fifty officers behind him, all glitter and jangle. Bulgarian labour cultivates both banks of the Danube, and keeps Belgrade from a vegetable famine. A very large proportion of the males speak Roumanian, which they have learned in their yearly visits to that country. This is not true only of the riverside population. When I sought a messenger at Gabrova, three men were brought me in half an hour who talked to my servant with perfect ease,

though a knowledge of Roumanian had not been demanded. Many, also, on the western border, speak Servian, but that poor and ill-settled country cannot attract foreign labour to such an extent as its wealthy rival.

What the Bulgar does with the money thus earned it is not easy to guess, unless he hides it. There is, or was, scarcely any coin current, and he certainly wastes none in luxurious living. His wealth in corn and cattle is surprising, and there is no part of the world, not even the West of America, where such rude plenty surrounds the homestead. But these agricultural riches can scarcely be called even the equivalent of money in the peculiar circumstances of the Bulgar, seeing that he does not dispose of them for coin. The peasant's hut has often been described. Along the Danube, about Plevna, and through all the western country it is half underground, chimneyless, and often windowless. A hole in the roof lets out the smoke and lets in the daylight. When a man prospers and gets a family, he will excavate a chamber right or left of this, perhaps both, which may show a tiny window, most roughly glazed, upon the level of the ground. In this den there is no furniture, saving an iron pot or two, three or four earthen plates manufactured at Gabrova, a jug of the same ware, a shelf, and a Turkish table. This is a disc of wood, standing six inches or so from the ground, upon a central leg, generally cut, leg and all, from a solid block of wood. The husband owns a wooden spade and an iron knife; his spouse has a knife also, and a spinning-wheel. They sit and sleep upon the earth; boys and girls all huddled together, on frowsy rags and sheepskins. Every article in the hut is filthy, but nothing so caked with dirt as the human inmates. They go unwashed from Sunday to Sunday, and their clothes last till they drop to pieces.

It is said that for all this squalid misery the Turk is responsible—that a people so hard working would surely rise to better things did not his systematic oppression crush them down. Again, it is said that the Mussulman peasant, lazy and tyrannical, lives by

robbing the industrious Bulgar. Of the misgovernment I have something to say presently; the other statement is false. It is not even true that the Moslem peasant is lazy. I have seen him working, I have entered his hut, I have admired the rolling harvest which his labour raised—for others' gathering too often. He may not work so stubbornly as the Bulgar, having a few kindly weaknesses from which that individual is exempt; but no European labourer toils so hard. Necessity compels him to do so, for otherwise his rival would "eat him up." Would that the Christian could learn a few qualities from him, such as cleanliness, honesty, self-respect. Enter a Turkish dwelling, though it be never so poor. The men look you in the face, offer a cigarette, or a spoonful of jam with a glass of water, or more, if you want and they have it. Everything is clean in the hut, though it be carelessly kept outside—not more so than the Bulgar's, however. The pretty, round-eyed children have no fear of you, nor need you fear them. All is in contrast, and all to the favour of the infidel. There is no secret in the disposal of a Turkish peasant's earnings. You see it in the modest finery of his children, or his wife's trumpery jewels. The Bulgar is more despicably prudent than to waste his substance on such trifles, and his wisdom is justified by the stacks of wheat and barley, the oxen and cows and horses that people his farm-yard, the flocks of poultry that scratch therein.

The Turk shows poorly in the comparison of wealth; it must be admitted, however, that I saw him mostly after the mild Bulgarian had plundered him. But if the rule of Pachas was so unjust and oppressive as has been declared, one cannot understand how those who suffered it were left in such prosperity. Not in France, alleged to be the Elysium of small proprietors, do the country people enjoy material wealth like that general in Bulgaria. If crops sell for little, the farmer's wants are less, and his "margin" is enormous. Radovince was a Turkish village before the Czar set up his head-quarters there; many Circassians

dwelt about it. At a mile distance, across the road, stands Vina, inhabited by Christians. A colleague had indicated to me a house there where the stranger was not scowled upon if he had money in his pocket, and to Vina I went one night, when belated on my way to Plevna.

The old peasant was full of complaints. I forget how many oxen and sheep the Russians had stolen from him, but the proportion was enormous. For all of them, in truth, he had recovered the value by application at head-quarters, though, as he said, many days' work was lost in going thither. But for a certain stack of barley his grief was sore. It had been looted to the last sheaf by Cossacks, whilst their colonel sat on the earthen *stoop* and declined to interfere. I asked what was the value, and to my astonishment he said 100 francs—no more, in this land of wine and corn, for a large stack of barley. I said, "But the Turks must have plundered you much more grievously?" "Oh," he answered, "the Tcherkess came from Radovince sometimes, and they took a fowl or a lamb, but never, never, in all their pilferings together; did they rob me of so much as this." My card, addressed to Colonel Scalon, the Grand Duke's first aide-de-camp, obtained redress, but I was sorry to have given it when I found that the ungrateful old brigand had charged against my five horses the consumption of half a stack in one night according to his own prices.

Another instance out of hundreds with which memory supplies me. When Gravitza redoubt was captured, of course we all rode into the village, which had been named as one where the Bashi-Bazouk had played his most unspeakable excesses. Not only was the population there, not a soul missing, but the place, moreover, was full of country wealth—oxen, corn, and poultry. A Russian officer asked a passing peasant, from whom he had bought two young turkeys for sixpence, if the people were not pleased to welcome their fellow-Christians. "We wait to see," replied the other frankly, "if you will treat us as well as the

Turks did." The answer showed that Bulgars are beginning to discriminate.

I remember writing, in my first astonishment at sight of Gabrova, that I wished any mountain village in Great Britain of like size had one bridge as good as the four which I had just observed. But those at Gabrova are not unusually fine nor large. They could be matched everywhere in the country, and excelled in a score of places. The Biela bridge would not pass unnoticed in England, and "Murray" would call attention to it if it stood anywhere in Europe, saving Bulgaria. Nor are the majority of these structures new, in the sense that they were built during Midhat Pacha's rule. They show various ages, as they might in England. The roads also are better than in Roumania—a poor compliment truly. Most people will think that when roads and bridges are attended to, the Government is not likely to be very monstrous, very unintelligent. A correspondent in war-time has no leisure for inquiry into past events, nor would he have shown prudence at that time in cross-examining the natives of Bulgaria; but he can tell certain facts, not immaterial, which he has seen, and transcribe evidence collected by the way. His experience is worth something, if it enables him to gauge the probability of statements the material truth of which he cannot hope to ascertain.

The stories of systematic oppression which have been circulated in Europe came from the "educated Bulgar." An English officer, most strongly prejudiced against the Turk, suddenly broke silence at a breakfast in Biela with the pregnant words, "Whenever I see an educated Bulgarian I long to kick him!" With rather a large experience of the "gentleman negro" in Jamaica, Sierra Leone, Barbados, Panama, and elsewhere, I feel justified in stating that the educated Bulgar is the most offensive being that exists. He shows a variety of talent, surface-deep, which makes one question whether the *savants* are right in declaring him to be Slavonic only by language. He knows everything,

more or less, except the manly virtues, truth, self-respect, courtesy, regard for weaker things, magnanimity, and courage. The American missionaries, of the Robert College at Constantinople, who produce this article, are expending noble labour upon the most hopeless soil. Only through the pupils whom they have taught but cannot train is Bulgaria able to communicate with Europe. And these had every inducement to make disturbance by misrepresentation. Putting aside jealousies, personal, national, and religious, self-interest moved them. They are fitted for nothing but a "little place," which the Turk would rather give to any than to one of them; whilst in the system they fondly hope to establish none but they would be found suitable for employment. If "autonomy" be granted to Bulgaria, its Government must fall into the hands of "Robert College graduates;" and its last state will surely be worse than its first.

The stupidity of Bulgarians is matched only by their sullen ill-will; the two qualities, working together, cause a state of things nowhere paralleled. A man with his pockets full of money might starve—were he not murdered—in the villages where food is so abundant. They will neither sell nor give to the stranger, but when he takes, they accept his cash without remonstrance as without thanks. This is such a strange feature of their disposition that we all tried to discover the meaning of it, but vainly. Two typical instances of their dulness of wit recur to my mind. In the house where I put up at Tirnova I saw a woman sewing, and was thus reminded of a garment that wanted repair. I gave it to her, showing the hole; she examined it with much sympathy, and handed it back. I displayed the other leg which had no rent, put them together, and pointed out the difference; but to no better purpose than to confuse the woman terribly. Not until I took up her own needle, and began to sew, did she understand what I meant. There was no ill-will here, but simple lack of intelligence. Another time, it was returning from the first battle of the Shipka Pass, riding by a cistern, round which a

crowd of young people were assembled, I begged a drink. It was offered by several, but my horse was restive, and spilt cup after cup. The people were quite sorry for me, but for at least five minutes all my efforts failed to make them perceive that my horse wanted holding.

The Bulgar's dishonesty is the simplest form of all, for it is limited by his intelligence. Of the cowardice so generally attributed to the race—not without apparent reason—doubts may be entertained. I have seen peasants bear wounded men through a hot fire, going at a cool and even pace. The water-carriers also did their work well when I chanced to observe them; in both cases, of course, they were acting under compulsion. But their courage is passive. The Bulgar legion never reached 8000 men, though boys of twelve years old were admitted. As for the cavalry enrolment, which was a pet scheme of the young Grand Duke, not one volunteer offered himself to the nucleus of picked Hussars who accompanied poor Derojinsky—a soldier whose loss all deplore. When the Bulgar legion was destroyed beyond the Balkans, it was fighting like a rat in a trap; no conclusion can be drawn from its behaviour in those battles.

I have left myself scarce room to speak of the "atrocities" as they deserve to be treated. No race, not even the Redskins, have behaved towards a flying and helpless population with such stolid cruelty as have the Bulgars towards the Turks. There was little enmity between the villagers, as is frankly confessed; the Tcherkess were hated, but not the Turks. It was mere lust of blood and loot which caused the Christian to rise against his neighbour when he saw him defenceless. In a wine-shop at Sistof a Bulgar was displaying his hacked knife when my courier entered. He said, "At first I used to go out with a gun, but this is better. I have killed ten of them. I have cut them like lambs." For brute ferocity this expression could not be matched, I think; it was far beyond the imagination of my honest servant, who repeated it to me five minutes after. I hope I have never

written, in a controversial spirit, of a matter which I did not think, at least, I understood. Opinions I may hold, but they are for myself alone. It was not given me to behold the scenes which poor MacGahan described with such thrilling simplicity, but whatever the misdeeds of Bashi-Bazouks across the Balkans, the northern Moslem were indeed slaughtered "like lambs." No excesses had they committed, even in their flight they paid for everything, as was universally confessed. Awful tales we heard of massacre by the Turks, but always, on approaching, they were localized farther off. So minute and circumstantial were these stories, brought by fugitives from the scene itself, that no one could disbelieve them wholly until he had visited the place.

Thus every correspondent telegraphed all over Europe how thousands had been murdered at Lovcha and Plevna, and the villages round about. After hearing the report of many refugees, half wild with fear and grief, I did not venture to doubt that awful horrors had been committed. But when Lovcha was recaptured, all the massacred Bulgarians came back to noxious life, to torture, kill, loot, and destroy. During the months the Russians stayed there, no report was issued on a single case of ill-treatment by a Turk. Of the villages round Plevna I have already described the state, and we know that all the Bulgar population which did not fly is living there yet, unmolested—or, if expelled by the exigencies of war, it only shares the wretchedness of its Moslem fellow-citizens. Nobody can have forgotten the disgraceful scenes at Sistof, Tirnova, and elsewhere, but in the country deeds were done immeasurably more dreadful. Gourko's march seemed to raise a swarm of devils. The assassins of Roumelia were "Pomaks"—renegade Bulgars, as was told me by a whole group of fugitives from thence; it is too abundantly proved by the deeds of their Christian kindred that a merciful religion may fail to subdue the inborn savagery of blood.

THE BALKANS.

SEEING what reams of paper have been blackened, within the last six months, for no purpose but to inform the European public on this matter, it might be supposed that the Balkans are familiar to all of us. I certainly thought so, but I find myself conspicuously wrong. There are people who fancy that an Italian climate reigns at the North Pole, and the wise laugh at them; but their notion is not much further "out" than is the general belief which I find ruling upon the subject of the Balkans. It is our fault, doubtless. Writing hurriedly of movements and actions, a correspondent often forgets to sketch his background, or uses expressions true enough in themselves, but needing comparison or qualification to give a true idea.

The mountains of Bulgaria are named among the great ranges of the world. They have their place with the Alps, the Pyrenees, the Carpathians;—and properly, of course, from the geographer's point of view. Finding them in this company, however, people conclude that they have something like an equal grandeur, that to traverse them is a great and arduous undertaking. In the mind's eye they picture towering cliffs and giddy precipices, black tarns and shadowy woods and headlong torrents. I have even observed in the illustrated press of Europe beautiful drawings which encourage this notion. But it is utterly false. What the Balkans may be east or west of the narrow line where the invading Russians touched them I know not. The Trojan Pass, or that of Mineh

Dagh, may be grand as the St. Bernard ;—I have not seen them. My experience of the Balkans is confined to the neighbourhood of the Shipka Pass. But since the crisis of the war arose there, the chief interest of the Balkans is there centred.

If the Cheviot Hills may be described as magnificent and terrible, and all the rest of it, so may these ; but if one should not employ such epithets to any barrier less formidable, say, than the Grampians, the Bulgarian range must content itself with praise more modest. The measured elevation of a peak above the sea is not a sure criterion of its actual height ; if it were, the Pyramid of Cholula would be a first-class mountain. From the Danube bank, Bulgaria rises in successive swells, and the actual slope of the Balkans may be said to begin at Tirnova. Starting from thence, one climbs a series of long waves, with short, steep valleys between, to Gabrova, eight hours' journey south-west. This town lies in a hollow, and from the meadows around it one sees the Balkans from crown to base, wofully diminished in their altitude by each of those encroaching waves that stretch thirty miles behind you. They have nothing of grandeur, and they inspire no awe. At a distance, indeed, they seem pretty, as hills green and wooded always must. But, upon approach, the forests dwindle to thorny brushwood, the rocks soften into commonplace rotundity. Why it should be so I know not, but trees do not flourish in any part of Bulgaria that I have seen. The landscape is practically void of them, and those few that catch the eye, poplars or wild pears for the most part, seldom reach a fair height. An exception occurs to me, however, in the big walnuts at Gor Monastyr, beneath which the Czarevitch had his quarters. In Wallachia trees are said to die at a certain age, owing, as I was told, to a stratum of cold or poisonous earth, spread at a certain depth below the surface.

There are no pines in the Balkans, which are thus deprived of one great element of fine scenery. There are no tarns, nor lakes either, very few streams, and no waterfalls that I could hear of.

"Precipice" is a very vague expression, which may mean anything from a railway embankment to a *cañon* of the Rio Grande; but, however it be interpreted, there are few phenomena of the sort in the Balkans. Those famous mountains are, in truth, as commonplace, amiable, and rotund as any little hills in Europe that make no pretence of beauty, or interest, or peril, but give themselves up in peace to bear corn and wool. The talk about "passes" is misleading. One could not drive across the Malvern Hills without a road, nor carry a bale of goods over Plynllynn as the crow flies; but these are not called great mountains. As a matter of fact, people can and do traverse the Balkans in every direction and in every part. There is not so much danger as in passing the Scotch hills, for, firstly, mists are rare; secondly, there are no high woods of much extent; and, thirdly, there are neither bogs, nor tarns, nor precipices to speak of, and very few brooks. The "brush" is thick enough, but it is kept down by Bulgarian industry, and one need only follow the line of copse to reach a field. This Bulgarian industry, to which I have always done justice, makes itself nowhere more conspicuous than in the cultivation of the Balkans. One may see there fine crops, carefully sown and tended, upon slopes so steep that one's horse will refuse to descend. When we retired from the first battle of the pass, the young Grand Duke Nicholas and Prince Mirsky led us down a slant so dangerously inclined that many Cossacks and horses rolled over together; but it was tilled from brow to foot.

There are perhaps a dozen passes recognized—under different names—between that of Trojan and Mineh Dag, which are more or less practicable for vehicles. Amongst these, however, was not reckoned that through which Ghourko made his desperate foray. According to the tale we heard in camp, the credit of this scheme belongs to young Prince Tzereleff, Secretary to General Ignatieff, and a private Tcherkess *ad interim*. A Bulgarian refugee of the neighbourhood chanced to tell him of the road, which was known, of course, but scarcely recollected. Prince Tzereleff seized the

notion of a dash through this unguarded outlet, and carried his refugee to the Grand Duke. This took place at St. Petersburg. His Highness was very cool, but when General Ghourko warmly supported the idea he consented. The Turks had made no provision for defending this defile, and we know what happened.

The story shows what sort of a mountain chain are the Balkans. A body of troops carrying their arms and a few days' rations could traverse it almost anywhere in summer. The defenders of the Shipka road were fourteen battalions, besides artillery and irregulars. Both ends of the defile rested in our hands, and our Cossacks scoured the open country a long way down each side of the hills. Every Bulgar was doing his bravest to track the fugitives, disarmed, disheartened, and bewildered,—but with all these advantages we never secured above fifteen hundred. The rest broke a way for themselves, and returned for vengeance. But I am speaking, of course, of summer weather. When the rains and the snow fall, the Himalayas are scarcely more impracticable than the Balkans, except at a very few points. The Trojan Pass, I have understood, is always serviceable, more or less ; but the Shipka, reckoned the “next best,” needs remaking every spring.

Once upon a time a causeway traversed the mountains here. Bulgars have no memory for historical events nor interest in them, so that none can give me trustworthy information about this work. By one it was attributed to Trajan himself, whose “name we still adore” along the Danube, though, with Lord Byron, perhaps his last worshipper vanished from Western Europe. Others said “Midhat Pacha,” of course ; but Giurgey, my host at Gabrova, declared that Mahmoud, the reformer, caused it to be built for his grand circuit through the provinces. This seems possible, for the work, though good, is not Roman, and its state forbids one to believe it only a few years old. Great part is overgrown with turf, but the road followed it, more or less, until the Russian engineers struck a better line. On this causeway one could see the force of winter storms and spring floods. It was originally built of square

stone blocks, fitted to each other without cement, and bound by a heavy curb. In a hundred places this stout pavement has been carried away and piled in a heap at some depth below ; that it was effected by one rush of water or by one movement of ice or snow is apparent. Thus the surface of the road is scoured every year, leaving naked rock, eaten out by wind and frost and rain, scored by masses of frozen snow, sharpened by the rapid wear of its soft strata. It must be remembered that if the Balkans be not more formidable in themselves than are the Cheviots, the Bulgarian winter is quite another thing than ours. Siberian winds blow from the Oural, the famous storms of the Black Sea have a clean course over these treeless fields. The Carpathians fail to protect Roumania from the savage north-easter, and Bulgaria has no defence at all. From October till April, the Balkans used to be impassable for vehicles except at Trojan. But the Bulgars are now civilized by the grace of the Czar. Within a few months' time, if they can pay their engineers, a railway will be traversing these historic mountains ;—and making no great boast of the feat.

A REALM OF OBI.

SOME of the irreverent have long felt a suspicion that the ancients knew more about this world of ours than is accredited to them in the 'Classical Atlas.' Greeks and Romans did not publish the log of every ship entering their ports, nor examine the crew of each *oneraria* returned from parts unknown. The silence of pedantic geographers, who evidently took small pains to verify the accounts handed to them, is not to be relied on. Gentlemen of that sort feel more interest in refuting a predecessor, in triumphing over his misstated facts and mangling his theories, than in widening the general knowledge. Nevertheless a man is startled at first when local antiquaries invite him to credit Greek ruins in the Transvaal. They do wisely to put forward unquestionable evidence in support of such a statement. That has been done. Friezes, capitals, and miscellaneous objects, Greek in character beyond any doubt, have been forwarded to Cape Town from the neighbourhood of Bloemhof. They are important enough to show—if one may trust the judgment of those who have examined them—that a large city once stood there, and that high civilization reigned therein. As is usual when the spell of oblivion breaks, it is suddenly discovered that the fact was known long ago. The ækist of Cape Colony, Van Riebeck, mentioned incidentally (edition of 1657, London) that far to the north lay a great city, Momotopata, adorned with temples, porticos, and columns. No one appears to have heard of the place

from that time till now. Upon this evidence the ruins below Bloemhof have been called by the name Van Riebeck gives ;—by-the-bye, he adds that diamonds abound there. Without committing myself to any opinion, I wish to put forward a very curious report I received on the Diamond Fields from a digger, very poor and very eccentric. At that time the idea of a Greek city in South Africa would have been ridiculed without mercy. I myself paid no attention to the tale, but since a Greek city is now admitted, I cannot but remember this man's declaration.

Very poor and very eccentric he was indeed. At that time rags commanded no pity on the Fields, for they often contained, in their dirtiest recesses, some little store of gems which duchesses might envy. Nor were we prone to accept a miserable way of life as evidence of poverty, since examples familiar to every one inculcated caution. But seeing this man every day—for I lived just above his claim at Bultfontein—seeing him always at work, with an animated jack-jumper of a bush-boy for sole companion, I fell into the habit of wishing him good-day and luck. He seldom answered, which fact gave, perhaps, a zest to my unwearied courtesy. But when he did throw back the dirty hair from his eyes, swollen and blood-shot—the digger's eye, inflamed with dazzle of the grit, and sunshine blazing on the snowy walls of "stuff," and poisonous dust of lime that fills the air—his reply was always "Nix, mate !" Early in our acquaintance I told him to bring me his first "find," promising a fabulous price for luck. He never brought it. His bush-boy grew more bird-like and less human daily. It was not difficult to see that these poor wretches were starving, presently. The conviction struck me one day, and I invited the man to my tent, whilst entrusting his boy to my head Kaffir, Chawles.

The urchin had a due share of those extraordinary gifts with which Providence has supplied his race for our bewilderment. He mimicked successfully a lion, an elephant, a baboon, an ostrich, and other animals within his experience ; fought a battle,

and died ; imitated me ; and then, whilst my Kaffirs rolled with laughter, suddenly changed to a likeness of Chawles,—all in that nervous, restless, uncomprehending manner which makes the bush-boy resemble a bird the more, the more he shows a simian intelligence. He neither laughed nor seemed to know what he was doing. His eyes never ceased to glint and turn. His small muscles quivered restlessly even when he imitated, with marvellous truth, the stately pawing of a lion. Before his performance, and immediately after, he devoured “mealies” and offal, nearly raw, in quantities to astonish even a Kaffir. And then he laid him supine, and slept, with features twitching, stomach swollen like a drum, and little thin legs extended but unrelaxed, ready to bound upon his feet at the slightest noise. An extraordinary creature is the Bushman,—one to drive conscientious anthropologists to despair.

Meanwhile I entertained my guest. He told me that he was an Africander of Huguenot blood. He had traded on a large scale up country ; but one misfortune after another had broken up his connexion with the Kaffir chiefs, and reduced him to digging on Bultfontein. Compassion would be quite thrown away upon many of his fellows in that state of life, but Vasson was not lucky. In four months of hard work he had found nothing. I was able to put the poor fellow into a small claim I had just purchased, where the usual percentage of half the finds for his labour should make him comfortable, and might give him a fortune. So, the next day he set to work rejoicing.

I did not see much of Vasson after that, except on a Saturday, when he brought my diamonds, if any, and balanced accounts. The venture was fairly successful. After a time I moved to New Rush, with a round sum which my particular claim had brought me ; and then, though not unlucky upon the whole, I met with an accident which laid me up for several months. It was in that time that I really made acquaintance with Vasson, who was very shy and retiring. Many stories he told to relieve the horrible

tedium of my illness. My friends more prosperous were not unkind; but the business of diamond-digging in that halcyon day was too full of excitement, too cruelly checkered by ups and downs, to leave remembrance for those "shut up and left" in the struggle. A joyous word at the door, a hasty tale of somebody's luck, or of somebody's folly, exhausted the charitable impulse of my comrades. Vasson was a man of another stamp—lower, I think, but more grateful to me then. Somewhat dull, very self-conscious, silent, as are all who have passed their life among savages, and unable by constitution and habit to see the best point of his own stories, he was still my pleasantest companion—in fact, my only one. Many curious hints and details I picked up from him of life "up country," which I now regret to have let pass without a note. But one tale of his—that which I am about to transcribe—was impressed by three repetitions. I am sure I have it correct. After hearing, the reader may decide for himself whether Cape Town antiquaries are right in identifying the ruins below Bloemhof with the ancient Momotopata.

In 1861 Vasson went up towards "the Lakes" with a train of five waggons, carrying about 5000*l.* worth of goods, cotton, gunpowder, cutlery, and the like. Even at that time the trade was not what it had been. Competition had set in, and, as a necessary consequence, a reckless system of credit. Though the great chiefs still held themselves bound to one or other trader, they began to cease coercing their inferiors. These, unrestrained by pride, and incapable of balancing the advantages of honesty, did not regard their bargains as sacred. They took what they could get, promised everything, and performed as little as possible. Under sufficient pressing, the kings would still perpetrate horrible tortures upon a swindler; but the ferocity of their justice deterred humane traders from appealing to it, the more especially since one serious word from his black suzerain would have stopped any chief;—which word was not pronounced. In fact, the monopoly was breaking up. But without monopoly, in these days of

enterprise and universal speculation, savage trade cannot be carried on. I must ask the reader to think out for himself the necessity of this case, since I have no room to demonstrate it. His reflections will be greatly aided by a short conversation with any merchant who has commercial relations with Africa, with the far East, and such latitudes.

Vasson understood his business, and he foresaw the dead-lock which has since come about. He resolved to leave the track, already too much beaten by Jews and carpet-baggers, who, getting their own goods on credit, could afford, in a dishonest sense, to sell them on the same terms. After eighteen months' wandering amongst old customers, he reached the northern limit of the Matabele country. That warlike people claim authority over all bordering tribes; and if the king had known that one of "his traders" had ventured across the frontier, it might have cost that daring man his life. But Vasson was well acquainted with the risk. The Matabele keep a line of desert round them, like the ancient Suevi. Their ferocious bands constantly traverse it, but Vasson trusted to his own vigilance, and the superhuman cunning of his bush-boys. These people to the trader are more than dogs to the sportsman. My friend's oxen and horses were all "salted"—that is, had suffered and survived the attacks of the *tzetze-fly*; with them he confidently ventured into parts unknown; and upon leaving the trade-route, he followed a course due westward, in about the latitude, as he thinks, of Sofala.¹

The desert barrier of the Matabele is about thirty miles wide, beyond which, as they tell you, extends a country to which "no

¹ The Matabele Kaffirs—more properly called Amatabele—are Zulu rebels, criminals, and desperate classes in general. They are, I suppose, the most ferocious savages of the world. What the Zulu was to other Kaffirs, that is the Matabele to Zulus. The dismemberment of Chaka's kingdom, and the destruction of his military system, will leave Zululand open to these fiends. They have exhausted all the country round, and I make no doubt that, unless we interfere by arms, Cetewayo's throne will shortly be filled by a monarch seven times more wicked than he. And the war will begin afresh.

man comes nor hath come since the making of the world." That was the question which Vasson proposed to test. A week's journey through lands where his oxen found abundance of forage, showed him that the Matabele, in this respect as in others, are indifferent to the truth. He came upon a district well wooded, full of game, and not uncultivated, though the people remained invisible. They had cause to hide, with such savage neighbours. Vasson scouted assiduously, but failed to discover so much as a farm-hut. He had not yet quite passed the area of *veldt* lands, and with some judgment and risk could take his waggons in a line tolerably straight. Twenty Hottentots and Bastards well armed made his company, besides half-a-dozen teamsters, and as many bush-boys. They had stood by him in worse fights than he was likely to encounter.

Where there is cultivation there must be people, and where people, trade. For the raw material appeared in plenty, and if these barbarians did not yet know the delight of cotton cloths and rum, business would be only the more profitable. Exciting work it is to push through an unknown country when the population remains obstinately out of sight, but African traders of the old school do not easily take alarm. Nevertheless, when he had marched for three weeks on end through this peopled solitude, passing never a road, seeing no house nor any inhabitant, Vasson began to feel anxious. For his life he entertained no fear at all, but a thousand accidents might wreck his fortune; and his Hottentots, afraid, like all negroes, of the unknown, grew more and more gloomy as they advanced. Game, however, showed in plenty, and thus the men escaped all pretence of hunger, that supreme excitement of insubordination and alarm.

After three weeks' steady journeying they found themselves before a chain of hills which barred their course. The vegetation had become more dense, and each day it grew more difficult to force the waggons on. Vasson announced that if from their tops no satisfactory prospect could be seen, he would turn back, and

try districts eastward of the Matabele, which are known, indeed, but rarely visited. Accordingly, he left the waggons there, and climbed the nearest hill with a few trusty Hottentots. A day and a half brought him to the top, and from a clear knoll he looked across the plain below. First to catch his sight was a great river flowing northward, along the foot of the high ground. Its banks, thickly wooded, were patched with clearings of lighter green, which showed more frequent towards the left, where a long space seemed to mark a town. Not less than twenty miles of country lay before Vasson's eye, so far as he could judge, and it was all peopled and cultivated. He took rough bearings of a *kloof* or pass which seemed likely to be practicable for his waggons, and returned in great contentment. Half-way back he met a couple of the men left in charge, escorting a number of strangers. The latter halted, whilst the Hottentots delivered their message. They brought overtures of friendship from an unknown sovereign. Vasson instantly produced his flask, and opened communication. The ambassadors were much like any other negroes of that district—almost naked, well-shaped, and snub-featured. Their ornaments and clothes showed no sign of intercourse with Europeans, at which view the trader rejoiced. They wore a smiling and gentle expression, and carried no arms. The one peculiarity which struck Vasson was their mode of arranging the hair—that distinctive mark among negro tribes. These people shaved the crown of the head, and twisted their wool back over a pad from forehead to nape. They spoke Matabele with some difficulty.

The purport of their message was an invitation to the royal kraal. They said that the white man's presence had been reported to their king long ago, to his great satisfaction. He wished no better than to trade, and he would make himself responsible for the white man's stock. In earnest of his good intentions, he had sent these officers to guide the traveller, entrusting them with presents of food. All this is so usual on the part of a negro monarch that Vasson did not feel surprise. Though omitting no

precaution, he followed the ambassadors readily. They did not lead him through the kloof which his sagacity had chosen, but guided the waggons by a longer route, perhaps more convenient, but toilsome enough.

It is hard work to gather details from an African trader. A negro is a negro to him, a king is a king, and his palace is sufficiently described by the noun-substantive. All that occurred to Vasson as worth mentioning about this people was, that they seemed more intelligent and better-tempered than the warrior tribes with whom he had hitherto done business. They were fairer, perhaps ; but in a negro kraal of the interior every shade of complexion may be noticed, from soot-black to bronze-yellow. Their features, too, were comparatively regular, but scarcely more so than in other cases. No exercise of memory could recall anything more peculiar about king or subjects. His majesty received the guest with usual ceremonies, raised him a large hut, and showed a perfect bewilderment of joy at the presents offered. He had never seen a white man before ; and such European manufactures as had hitherto made his choicest spoil had been won from marauding Matabele. The king was young and good-looking. He possessed some hundreds of wives, a little army of *caboceers*, and used such ceremonial as is affected by other negro potentates. Trade proved to be excellent. The people had quantities of ivory, dressed skins, a good deal of gold-dust, and a few ostrich-feathers of high class. Some ancestral stones they valued also, which Vasson now recognizes to have been diamonds. For the sake of encouragement he brought a few from influential personages ; but, putting no value on them, they were soon lost. The trade could be properly described by no word less emphatic than "roaring." Whole tusks of ivory Vasson bought for a roll of cotton, feathers at six pennyworth of rum, superb *karosses* at a similar rate. In two months he had sold all his stock remaining, and justly considered himself a capitalist.

During this time he passed through the adventure which struck

my imagination. The royal town, as I have said, was clustered on a spur of the mountain, with an arm of the river at its foot. The guides had brought Vasson over a defile many miles to the southward, and so down the river-bank. But when he began to think of returning, he remembered that kloof upon the northern side of the spur, which would certainly cut off many miles of road, if practicable. To his inquiries the answer was unanimous, that a thousand difficulties intervened. But something in the manner of his hosts convinced Vasson that they were telling a falsehood. Having now such a precious cargo, all kinds of fancies and suspicions gathered in his mind. He resolved to explore; and with that object accustomed the people to see him take long walks into the country, with his gun and a bush-boy. Then, having disarmed the jealousy of these simple fellows, he set out one day for the excursion.

Several paths led from the town to farm-lands on the river-bank. Vasson intended to round the hill, but, after walking a couple of miles, he crossed a narrow track that mounted on his right. Without hesitation he followed this short cut. The steep and broken path seemed to have had few travellers of late, but it climbed in a direction such that Vasson began to hope it would take him to the kloof itself. The distance was greater than he had thought; four hours' good walking carried him only to the crest of the descent. He met no soul, but fetishes in abundance, which chilled the very marrow of his bush-boy. Fearsome objects they were indeed, bits of awful rag tied to sticks, rotten chunks of wood across the road, feathers and strings fluttering on a branch. These things became more frequent as they went on, and Vasson began to fear that the kloof might be a fetish place, which would account for everything.

The path ended suddenly at a table-rock, which stood sheer above the entrance to a defile. Vasson halted in amaze. Before and above him rose a great propylon garlanded with creepers. Its blocks of huge stone showed scarcely one effacing mark of time.

Gods long forgotten held court thereon, accepted tribute of peoples extinct, received the worship of mighty monarchs unrecorded. The cornice harboured flowers and birds in its bold ledge, but the shadow of it fell almost as clean as on the day when ancient colonists raised it—who shall tell how many centuries ago? The great arch stood at right angles to Vasson's place, and spanned nearly half the narrow cleft. Twenty men abreast could have walked through it, and the ground below was level like a causeway, though overgrown with brush. To left, the sheer precipice advanced so suddenly that Vasson could catch but a glimpse of the river; to right, at a hundred yards' distance, the semicircle was completed, shutting out all further view up the pass. A deadly silence reigned. Not a breath stirred the glossy leaves, shining and glittering against the hot blue sky. Whiplike creepers trailed from the cornice without a shiver, and their bright stars of blossoms hung motionless. The sunshine burnt with stilly vehemence upon the pale-red stone, and checkered it with shadows deep as sculptured leaves. Such sight as that never came before the wanderer's eye. Vasson was seized with a reckless curiosity to know what lay beyond.

Right and left the cliff rose like a wall, so cut by human labour. Where he looked down, the vines beneath his feet had been smoothed away, but at a little distance on either side they fell to the very ground. He turned to force a way through the bush, and thus caught sight of his companion, who lay prostrate and shivering with fear, his eyes covered. Thus were the natives used to fall, no doubt, while they supplicated the fetish. Vasson told the half-inanimate creature that he wished to consult the gods in their very home, and left him there. He pushed without difficulty along the escarpment, for such it was—designed, without doubt, for the use of archers in case of attack. A few yards on, he found a creeper suitable, slung his rifle, and dropped down. Thoughtlessly letting go his hold, he fell waist-deep into a morass, hidden by broad-leaved plants and herbage. A cry of despair

escaped him, but the bottom of the morass proved to be hard as stone. After great exertions, sounding with his ramrod, he gained the bank, which was faced with slabs of granite. Superhuman in its grandeur the arch appeared as Vasson stood beneath it and looked through. Upon the side remote from his former station, footholes had been rudely cut, and two strong ropes hung from the top. He saw the trick now. By this staircase mounted the fetish-priests to play their savage tricks upon the simple folk who asked their aid.

Keeping a look-out for treacherous magicians and snakes scarcely less harmful, Vasson walked up the kloof. After two or three turnings, always between those barriers of cliff, which at each corner bore a ruined turret, he saw at length the open space beyond, and once more halted with a thrill. What he had supposed a kloof was a level basin of many hundred acres. Though it was well clothed with trees, he could trace the lie of the land ; but no opening appeared save that in which he stood. Lofty hills closed round it like a wall. But other sights absorbed him. The causeway he had followed led to another propylon, and through that to a maze of stately ruins. White as marble in the distance shone the walls of a city, gapped, dismantled, but still superb. Only a glimpse of their circuit could be gained through intervening clumps of wood. Above and under and among the ruins green heads of foliage rose high into the air, with white columns gleaming through. Vasson was but a trader, and not imaginative ; but such a sight killed fear. Experience told him that the fetish-men themselves would not be likely to dwell in these haunted ruins ; indeed he marked a few brown huts under a knoll, with people moving to and fro. Heedless of consequences in his excitement, he plunged into the woods upon his left.

Stumbling over broken columns, turned from his course by walls half erect, he struggled on, guided by the hunter's instinct. After two hours' work the bastions of the city gleamed on a sudden through the trees. He had approached within fifty yards before

seeing them. Like a hill of masonry the dismantled blocks sloped upwards. Trees stood amongst them, bushes sprang in every cleft between huge stones. Ten yards in air hung a big rock, lifted by the crest of a young cotton-tree, hurrying towards the light. Vasson climbed easily over the ruins. Within he found a vigorous jungle reigning, pavements all covered and broken, streets and houses uprooted. A few yards on either side bounded his utmost view, but what he saw convinced him of the luxury once ruling in this savage land. To right and left he made his way, finding only trees and thickets in a wilderness of rubbish. The tall white columns evidently stood in another quarter of the town. It was time to set back. But just as he made up his mind to turn, Vasson caught a glimpse of more important ruins, and pushed on for a last chance.

Another scramble on walls overthrown brought him to the edge of such a cavity as misdirected experience enabled him to recognize with ease. It was a "pan," says Vasson, fitted with seats half-way round. Those who know South African scenery will perceive how natural was the mistake. What Vasson thought to be a "pan" was doubtless a theatre. It seemed to me strong evidence of truth that the man should intelligibly describe objects so far beyond his knowledge as a propylon and a Greco-Egyptian theatre. The ranges of seats were almost perfect, and the wall of the uposkenion—to use the proper word—could be distinctly followed. Enough of it was left to give half-a-dozen persons a lofty seat. So many, in fact, lounged upon it, basking in the sun. The bright colours of their dress caught Vasson's eye upon the instant. He crouched in superstitious awe, for his nerves had been long on stretch. The skin of these people was white, their costume strange. Instinctively the explorer hid, but not in time. They saw him, and, leaping from the perch, they fled with an eerie clamour. Peering down, Vasson saw them pass between the shattered orchestra and the public seats. All his tremors vanished. The white complexion was yellow and diseased, the

white hair sapless, the brilliant dresses fluttering tufts of rag. The creatures who dared to occupy that haunted city were Albino idiots, a class very common in negro-land. Of their colour the fetish-men made use, no doubt, when needful, and their foolishness preserved them from the terrors of the place.

Vasson hastened back, though he judged that the Albinos' exaggerated report would be more likely to alarm the priests than to stir them to pursuit. He had marked his track, of course, and followed it with speed. When the brown huts again came into sight, he was not surprised to observe a great animation reigning. The Albinos all were there, fluttering like a small crowd of parrots on the ground. But the fetish men and women had doubtless withdrawn to perform their incantations—in which they at least believe—and to construe this portent with awful alarms. Vasson crept from bush to bush across the open, gained the kloof, plunged into the morass where he had sounded it, swarmed the cliff, and found his bush-boy—still prostrate, still with eyes covered, still praying or sleeping, or—one knows not what to fancy of a creature but half-human. At his master's kick he raised himself quietly to follow. Choosing a back way they reached the town before sunset, and Vasson called upon the king at once with his P.P.C. He "grasped the situation," and perceived that the fetish-men would be no long time before discovering that the white stranger had explored their mysteries. The small surplus of his stock Vasson distributed amongst the royal household and the most powerful *caboceers*. Twenty-four hours after beholding these strange sights he inspanned for the home journey.

Vasson passed safely through the Matabele realm, not without suspicion, however. Judicious bribes saved him. In reaching the colony he found himself a man of fortune. But successful traders in South Africa are the favourite victims of legal knavery. They gain an exaggerated notion of their shrewdness, which is only rectified by disastrous matching with the trained wit of German Hebrews. Vasson, like others, was as good as ruined

the day he opened business. Three years after, he was obliged to take the "Kaffir road" once more, and his course was naturally directed towards that rich, retiring, and unsophisticated population, the secret of whose existence he had breathed to no soul living before me. But circumstances had changed. Who shall guess how the Matabele had heard of his illicit explorations, or how rumours wander across the desert? The means by which savages learn news, &c., has occupied many minds, but it did not seem *actuel* to Vasson when the Matabele seized his waggons, arms, goods, and Hottentots for treason, taking credit for leaving him his life. My poor friend returned with a single horse and a sack of "mealies." The first venture into fairyland made his fortune; the second ruined him beyond hope. After that catastrophe he rubbed along with petty trade, penuriously saving up for another expedition. The ancients were wise. It costs a man his life to see the mysteries of the gods. In the hope of sudden wealth Vasson had tried the Diamond Fields, but to no purpose, for the object he had in view. None who keep before them a definite design succeed there, the evil Fates alone know why, for surely these deserve protection. When I left, Vasson had gathered but a very few hundred pounds toward the thousands needed. I have heard nothing from him since, but the newspapers inform us that Momotopata has been identified in certain Greek ruins below Bloemhof in the Transvaal. What then was Vasson's city? Were there two Greco-Egyptian colonies?

THE CASE OF CAPTAIN SLADE.

WE are bidden to believe that the *Newgate Calendar* once made favourite reading for our British public. Taste has improved since that time, and such bald monotony of horrors would scarcely interest now even those young people whose literature is represented to be in parlous state. There exists, however, a judicial record more ghastly, but at the same time more dull, than the annals of London crime. This is the report of cases tried before the Vigilantes of Montana, that committee, self-appointed, which undertook to replace a feeble and corrupt administration in the mining camps of the Far West.

A certain variety is found in the *Newgate Calendar*, but the Vigilantes dealt with only two forms of guilt—highway robbery and murder. We see, in general, a straightforward simplicity about the crime, which robs it of half its atrocity at the first glance. The murder is done in daylight, *coram populo*. The villain is always called by some nickname, or an affectionate diminutive. Neither judge, jury, nor reporter has particular ill-feeling against him. Those even of his victims who happen to survive express indignant sympathy with his hard fate. Horrors related in this tone do not make one shudder like our foul and midnight deeds. But if one keeps one's mind upon the actual facts, neglecting the quaintnesses of speech and the light-heartedness of all parties at the trial, it is seen that our judges have sentenced very few villains so consummate as those whom Lynch

law suppressed. It was a rule of the committee to accept no evidence of offences done outside its immediate jurisdiction. Montana was a refuge for desperadoes who had made other places too hot for them, and the Vigilantes established a police system which warned each community of a ruffian's arrival. This information, however, was no more than a warning. The rowdy started with a "clean slate" in his new digging, and past offences were never so much as alluded to. Bearing this in mind, it is awful to hear of twelve murders charged in two years against one man, eight confessed by another, and so on.

Many interesting points of character and custom arise as one studies this dry history; but I am in haste to reach the extraordinary case of Captain J. A. Slade, one of the very few which differ from the regulation model of such things.

The captain had talents, education, and business abilities which marked him out for success, and success he won in all his ventures. Amongst people by whom liberality is carried to the point of silliness, his hand was readiest and freest, among wits he was wittiest, amongst energetic men the most active. I have no account of Slade's personal appearance, though his handsome wife is described incidentally, but I should picture him as a big blonde man, with laughing blue eyes and a kindly mouth. His face, I should say, would be reddened with drink, and his voice hoarse. His eyes should have a wandering brightness, which might warn a doctor of mischief unsuspected in the brain. For it is very evident that poor Slade, shrewd and clever as he might be, was mad—deranged, perhaps, by bad whisky and passions unbridled.

It is understood that he left his native Illinois in flight before the sheriff, Johnson, who pursued him four hundred miles. Having quarrelled with a man in the street, upon grounds unknown, he threw a big pebble and killed him on the spot. Arriving at Virginia City, he obtained employment from the Overland Stage Company, in which his unusual talent for "business"

raised him at once to high position. At the same time, Slade's social charms won the friendship of every class. The steady and the prosperous liked him, whilst by the poor, honest or otherwise, he was simply adored. No whisper of unlawful dealings in property ever arose against Slade. He was simply a mad murderer, of the best intentions ; and the moral code at Virginia City was, and possibly is, very lenient to mere bloodshed. It will be seen that his condemnation was an accident. Strangers only could give Slade his due, whilst the Vigilantes of his own township walked sobbing away.

The first introduction of this maniac to Virginia City told the Vigilantes that a desperado of a new description had arrived among them. The stage-post at Julesberg, on the Platte river, was kept by a morose and unpopular man, singularly unfitted for his difficult position. A three-cornered quarrel was always waging at Julesberg between the stage officials, the inhabitants, and passing trains of emigrants. Each party accused the others of stealing cattle, and it seems probable that all were guilty. Jules, the station-master, behaved in such a lawless way—not only to his enemies, but to the company itself—that his dismissal was resolved on, and Slade was named for the post. There had been other quarrels between these men before the new station-master arrived to take possession. He travelled by the coach. Jules, wild with spite, “sequestered” the team, refusing to allow it to proceed. Words grew hotter and hotter, until the dispossessed man fired a charge of buckshot at Slade, who was unarmed. Though he escaped with life, some of the pellets remained in his body till fate overtook him.

It is in evidence that Slade “went down the road till he recovered of his wound.” Jules also departed, boasting everywhere of his cowardly triumph. No one made even a pretence of interfering, and the township speculated, with calm curiosity, as to which would prove the better man when they met on equal terms. This event never took place, if I rightly understand the

tale ; for one of Slade's devoted clients marked down his enemy, and the avenger hurried to the spot. I prefer to accept a version of the story which declares that Slade covered him with his pistol, saying, "Jules, I'm going to kill you !" that the other answered, "Well, I suppose I am gone up ! You've got me now !" Whereupon he fell dead. There is another story, far more hideous and irreconcilable, as I prefer to think, with Slade's recorded characteristics. This alleges that he tied Jules fast, and shot him "by degrees. He also cut off his ears and carried them in his vest pocket for a long time." Frankly, I cannot believe this of the man. And public opinion would have reprobated cruelty of this sort, whereas Slade's popularity mounted higher and higher.

Holding an important position in the community, and distinguished alike for shrewdness and resolve, he was naturally invited to join the Vigilantes, when murderers and thieves had made honest men's lives intolerable at Virginia City. What part he took in the grand judicial raids about Christmas time, '62-'63, will never be known. We may suppose that he threw himself into the movement with a furious zeal that alarmed his comrades. His new-born hatred of criminals led him into dreadful crime. One day, visiting some emigrants, he learned that their stock had vanished, whether strayed or stolen was not clear even to them. Slade, however, entertained no doubt at all. Boiling with indignation, he galloped to a neighbouring "ranche," opened the door, and shot "miscellaneous," killing three men and wounding the fourth. Whether they had so much as seen the cattle is still a matter of dispute.

Murders of this sort, perpetrated, as they would say, without an evil motive, did not come under the cognizance of the Vigilantes. It seems that a man might have depopulated the neighbourhood, if he only took pains to make a quarrel before shooting, and to keep his hands off property. Slade appears to have abused this privilege as no man ever did before or since. His life is a record of shootings, stabbings, and assaults. When sober, indeed, Slade

was the kindest, most genial of men ; when drunk, the madness came out, and his pranks, unrestrained by any moral sense, were those of a playful tiger. A crowd of admiring dependents always followed him, ready to join his maddest follies and to battle for him to the death. Their favourite amusement was to "take the town." Slade gave the signal for a spree by mounting himself and two followers on one horse, and galloping through the streets, shooting in all directions, and yelling Indian war-cries. At the very first sound, shopkeepers and decent people closed their doors, put out the lights, and got their arms ready for emergencies. Very often Slade and his friends rode into a store full-gallop through the window, and played "old gooseberry" inside. But his liberality in accepting the estimate of damage made his visits not wholly unwelcome to some parties.

The Vigilantes considered their work done, after the execution of five monstrous ruffians on January 14, 1864. No gang of road-agents, or highwaymen, as we should call them, remained, nor any group of men who murdered for a living. They therefore dissolved their anonymous committee, leaving in its place a "people's court," to which offenders might be summoned openly. Though uncommissioned by the government, it kept a judge, sheriff, and regular officers, whose proceedings were formal and solemn. For various offences Slade was prosecuted in this court, and he always treated its officials with respect until the last escapade. At the same time, his former friends of the Vigilantes warned him that a new state of things had arisen. The old order was changed, they said, and bloody roystering could be allowed no more than ferocious plunder. Slade promised to amend, as we might be sure he would, and again showed his virtue by pummelling almost to death a poor wretch suspected of some moral fault.

But the day of fate arrived. Slade had been drunk and "cutting up," all night before. He and the devoted phalanx which clung to him—less for money than for love, we hear—had made the town a "perfect hell." In the morning, J. M. Fox, the sheriff

of that people's court we have mentioned, met the scarcely-sober ruffian, and boldly took him into custody. His clients tumultuously followed into court. There the sheriff began to read his warrant, which Slade snatched from him, tore into bits, and trampled on. A proclamation, this, of war, such as no man in his senses could have made. It was so understood by all parties. Click, click, Slade's thronging friends got their revolvers ready; the constables looked to Fox for orders. He, whose courage stood unquestioned, did not hesitate a moment, but withdrew quietly. The old committee met at once. Their own delegated court had been defied successfully, and they knew well that a fight had begun for life or death. If Slade and his followers were allowed to feel their triumph, not a member of the Vigilantes would be allowed to live. Their former comrade knew them all, and they knew him. Since war had arisen, he was much too intelligent to be merciful, and understood too well the ferocious necessities of his position. But, at the same time, nobody proposed Slade's execution. We have it on the word of one of the committee, that such a suggestion would have been negatived indignantly. These honest and resolute citizens admired, and some loved, the man whose existence among them had become impossible.

A sentence of perpetual banishment would doubtless have been delivered. But, in the meanwhile, a messenger had been sent to the sub-committee at Nevada, for the Vigilantes of Virginia City could scarcely hope to meet the opposition of Slade's friends, even to this minor punishment. At Nevada they had not been exposed to the hero's fascination. It was told to them only, that their chosen sheriff had been defied, their court insulted. Six hundred miners formed into column, and marched to Virginia City, all armed to the teeth.

Meantime, Slade's real friends were not idle. Very quaintly we are told how a leading member of the committee went to seek him, and told the doomed man, "in the quiet, earnest manner of one

who feels the importance of what he is saying, 'Slade, get your horse at once and go home, or there will be h—— to pay!' The other started, and asked, 'What do you mean?'

"'You have no right to ask what I mean. Get your horse at once, and remember what I tell you.'"

After a moment's consideration, Slade called for his horse, and actually mounted. But a sympathizing friend brought a cup of comfort, which killed him as surely as poison. For, after drinking, Slade galloped up and down the street, shouting insults to the principal Vigilantes. But he did not forget a peril which none could measure more accurately than himself. The gods had forsaken him, nevertheless, and the very recollection of his danger urged him to an act of monstrous folly. Seeking out the judge of the people's court, he took him prisoner, as a hostage for his own safety, threatening him even with a cocked pistol.

During this time the miners were marching up from Nevada. In answer to some who expressed sympathy for Slade, the immense majority declared that they were tired of his pranks, that they had not left their work for nothing. The Vigilante who had summoned these allies saw that they would bring quite another tone to the deliberations. Being mounted, he rode ahead of the column, and found the executive committee of Virginia counselling together behind a waggon, "at the rear of a store on Main-street, where the Ohling-house stone building now stands." To them he hastily announced that the Nevada men "meant business anyhow," that since they had been summoned from their claims, "they would not stand in the street to be shot down by Slade's friends; but that they would take and hang him." This news made a terrible stir, for, besides the friendly feeling of nearly all the Vigilantes, it seemed probable that nothing less than war would ensue. But the very principle of popular authority was at stake, and the committee passed a hurried resolution to the effect that, if the body of miners demanded Slade's execution, it must be left in their hands. With which news the Vigilante galloped back, full speed.

Slade heard it on the instant, and knew his death was certain. He apologized to the judge, saying, "that he would take it all back." But wisdom came too late. The head of the column swung round the corner of Wallace-street at quick-step, and halted in front of C. S. Pfout's store, where Slade was, with the judge. The "execution officer" of the committee stepped inside, and told him the miners' resolve. In most cases of Lynch law a trial was held, with chosen counsel on each side and a jury: but since the Vigilantes recognized no forms or precedents, going only upon common sense and common justice, they dispensed with these ceremonies where the prisoner's guilt stood patent. In this case, also, there was not a moment to lose. If Slade's friends got time to advise and collect, they would certainly attempt a rescue by main force. Amongst the crowd of executioners were many who would certainly not fight against them, if they did not join. The committee itself had dispersed in sorrow. But Slade did not make a struggle for it. He gave way at once, begging only to see his wife before he died. She was a woman of great beauty and fascination, devotedly attached to her terrible husband. A messenger galloped at headlong speed to Slade's ranche, twelve miles away, where the lady was dwelling. The most accomplished horsewoman of the country, it was hoped she would arrive in time to stir into glowing heat the rage of her husband's followers. But this danger the others recognized, and at once made their preparations for the appointed doom. They dared not take their prisoner up the street. Just opposite to Pfout's store was a "corral," or cattle-pen, the gate-posts of which were strong and high. Across the top they laid a beam, attached to it a rope, and set a box on end below. Then Slade was marched across the street, surrounded by the best-armed and most numerous force that ever has gathered in Montana.

The leading citizens of the town begged with tears for the prisoner's life, but the miners were inexorable. One threw his arms round Slade, and swore that they should kill him before they

touched his friend. But a hundred guns were levelled instantly, and he fled. The stern avengers pursued, brought him back, and compelled him to witness the justice of the people; nor did he then escape without a solemn promise of obedience in future.

All being ready, the command was given: "Men! do your duty!" The guard faced about, and six hundred rifles were presented at the maddened and bewildered crowd;—the box was pulled away, and Slade finished his wild career. All had long been over when his wife galloped up. Her grief was terrible to see—such as made those stern executioners almost doubt whether a man so mourned could have deserved his fate. He did so, beyond dispute; and if it be the aim of punishment to deter others from offence, never was retribution justified more completely. Murderers and highwaymen of low degree had been already visited with their deserts; Slade's fate warned another class that brutal rowdyism would no more be suffered, on the plea that its outrages were committed without malice. But the traveller in those districts where he swaggered and bullied will do best, even now, to keep his opinion to himself about Slade's fate. So long as one of his old subordinates survive, says Professor Dimsdale, "any insult offered to his memory would be fearfully and quickly avenged." For this reason I have thought the case of Captain Slade worthy of note.

NATIVE GENTLEMEN.

I.—BOSSOONOGO.

I HAVE that kind of feeling, towards purists of the grammarian sect, which leads a man to experience great surprise on the discovery that, for once, his contemned critic stands in the right of it. There has been much sneering in India over the expression "native gentleman," and I, with others, have silently scorned the scorner. The words, we thought to ourselves, are good words, and their combination gives an idea quite distinct and satisfactory. Without any mistrust I set them down on this fair sheet of paper, when accident had recalled a memory which I venture to think worth reading in an idle moment. But as it stands before me, I suddenly perceive that the phrase is indeed equivocal ; that it does not necessarily describe the subject of this story. With no better clue than the title to guide him, a reader may suppose that I design to treat of the Adam Bede or the John Halifax family ; or he may hurry to the conclusion that I meditate an essay on the appointment of Hindoos to the magistracy—or half-a-dozen other things foreign to my mind. The purists are right then. The expression is bad, since it conveys no clear idea ; I do not cross it out, because a man should make the amende upon conviction ; but after this article—and perhaps another or so—I forswear the words.

If the proper study of mankind be man, the most interesting problem for one gentleman should be another. Under various

disguises of skin and feature, I have met gentlemen in places the least likely, where, strange to tell, I never met a lady. Of such a savage hero I propose to treat. To-day's report from Cape Coast Castle tells us that Bassan-nu-goonah has been named generalissimo of the "Djabin contingent," under General Koffee Kallcalli, ex-king of Ashanti. A friend who writes me that this appointment is reckoned one amongst many signs of trouble brewing over yonder, adds, "Perhaps you remember Bassan-nu-goonah? He was brought from Coomassie as a prisoner when our troops retired."

Few gentlemen whom I have met dwell more clearly in my recollection. I did not see the capture of him, which took place under circumstances that well displayed his supremacy in that coolness most becoming to a "swell." Bossoonogo, as we used to call him, left a trifle of two thousand pounds in gold-dust at home, when he ran straight through Coomassie after fighting his best at Adahsu. The next day he came back to seek it, with desperate terrors, as he himself informed me, but calm as an oyster, the sailors said. A tempting bit of loot was my friend, as he sauntered through the market-place towards his abode. On nothing did he tread less aristocratic than beaten gold; a bracelet of nuggets weighing several pounds encircled his arm, and the top of his velvet umbrella was gold also. But nobody interfered with him as he passed by, several slaves following; so Bossoonogo took courage, and after recovering his property, he thought to do a little act of loyal service for his king. The palace was full of arms and slaves—sullen, impassive ruffians—who were doubtless ordered to remain and watch us. They had been gathered in a back court, but no sentries stood over them; for what had we to fear? Thither marched Bossoonogo, opened negotiations through a window, intrigued over a wall, and began to transport contraband articles by the back-door. In other words, a passing officer discovered this gentleman receiving arms from the palace through a hatch, and sending them by his attendants into the thicket near by. Thus was taken Bossoonogo, with his gold sandals, his

nugget bracelet, and his two thousand pounds' worth of dust hanging on his arm like a market-basket.

I won't delay to ask closely what became of that bag of gold, because it might raise questions uncomfortable to answer. That my noble black friend had miscalculated his money, seems as improbable as that my noble white friend who valued our loot should have made an error in weighing the bag. Nor can I believe that the former told a falsehood, whilst it is grotesque to suppose that the dust was privately looted. Samson could not carry two thousand pounds in gold upon his arm; and what Bossoonogo had himself in hand was, doubtless, the six hundred pounds and odd which was duly accounted for by the prize-agents. The rest his slaves were bearing, and they prudently made off, saving a "captain of a hundred," who, perhaps, owned gold sandals likewise, or, perhaps, stood by his master loyally. Any way, he was taken.—I am bound to admit, however, that the chief scouted this explanation, and asked if I could suppose him such a fool as to trust his money to slaves.

These events I did not see, as has been already stated. My own acquaintance with Bossoonogo was made on the march. The Naval Brigade had charge of him and his retainer, the centurion aforesaid, with a third captive, whose offence I did not learn, or have forgotten. They were tied wrist to wrist with twine, and all of them were attached to a sturdy marine, who walked behind, and twitched the string from time to time. It was not a dignified manner of advancing. The marine looked sulky and foolish, like an organ-grinder who leads restive monkeys that don't "draw" as expected. All the more chance had my gentleman to show his breeding; and, certes, he did himself justice.

The Ashanti noble takes a special pride in fine manners, and a fine manner is the same the whole world round. To be always calm, always self-possessed, and outwardly good-tempered, is no more a boast of the English gentleman than of the Red Indian,

the Arab, Malay, or Negro, who prides himself upon his style. But seldom have I seen any of these put to such a cruel test as was poor Bossoonogo. When I first beheld him, I was sitting on a stump by the side of the path, waiting till the long train of men passed by in double files. The three Ashantis walked behind, in front of the naval carriers. I looked at them with curiosity, not knowing that we held any prisoners. Bossoonogo threw me a bright glance, recognized my dress as differing from that of common soldiers, and gave a smiling bow, such as a prince might give to some stranger, whom he perceived to be of equal rank. I returned it with courteous formality, and questioned the marine about his charge. That honest fellow had been much struck with Bossoonogo, who was a monstrous puzzle to him. He told me, with epithets and amplifications quite needless, but overlooked on campaign, that the middle chap set up for being a gentleman. "I could see for myself," argued the marine, "that this was just a naked nigger like any of the rest ; and what could he mean by his bows and grimaces ?" It seemed to Private Smith very Frenchy and suspicious, covering evil designs, the more to be dreaded insomuch as they were incomprehensible. I sent for my interpreter, who was well on ahead, hasting to recross the Prah. For all our victories and successes—wherein, be it owned, the man showed as much courage as was needful—he could not feel triumphant till he had safely recrossed the legendary river. Not easily is broken up the prestige of a conquering people, amongst those whom they have never seen, except as slaves and fugitives. With Coomassie blazing behind them, and corpses unburied on our returning path, Yarbro and his fellows could not trust the evidence of their eyesight. But when they had traversed the frontier stream without molestation, it came upon them very suddenly that they, and no one else, had beaten the Ashanti. Whereupon their mouths were opened wide, and great became the glory of their individual achievements.

Yarbro had to sit on a stump till we reached him, for a nigger

would not have been allowed to elbow his way back, along that three-foot clearing in the forest. What a strange and weird business it was, that Ashanti expedition! My diary forbids me to pretend that it seemed other than most wearisome at the time; but war is always wearisome. What distinguished this above all others was its strangeness, which now seems romantic, and its everlasting gloom. As we left Cape Coast we seemed marching into the night, a darkness illumined by unwholesome fires. Echoing explosions, noxious sights, and evil smells broke out along the track. Not in our day, nor by soldiers trained in European war, has the like of that expedition been witnessed. Who that was present can forget—though, like myself, he have followed many campaigns—the night before Adahsu: that deluged bivouac to which the winds of heaven all rendezvoused? It is now a dream, superbly picturesque, which was then a horror of discomfort. Through the sheeting rain Hume made his bridge, by flare of torches quenched as soon as lit. The racing stream blazed with their reflections, as they passed from hand to hand. A dull red glow through the trees revealed the Ashanti quarters upon the rising bank beyond, and above the thud of mallets, the swish of rain and howl of wind, we heard the war-song of the savages, assembled to contest possession of their capital. Well by that time we knew the sound. A dismal sough of horns accompanied the chorus, and stray shots boomed among the echoing trees. At the time, to us wet through and shivering, these sights and sounds in the velvet darkness were a bore and a threat, nothing else. We knew there was fierce work before us, and we knew not what the morrow would bring. Beyond the utmost that our foes could do lurked the terror of disease—a haunting fear too well grounded. Of the pleasant fellows who crowded for refuge under a roof of boughs which I had prudently constructed, but one has still his number at the mess. Of five, one was killed next day, gallantly pushing, where he had no need to be, in the thickest fight; one died on his way to Cape Coast; one, who reached England with

especial honours, untouched by war or fever, simply sank and perished, with no visible disease, after three weeks' happy sojourn with his friends ; one accepted service in that death-hole, Cape Coast Castle, and so died. Something I could write of these men, at a time and place fitting, which might make the wildest negrophile doubt whether we do prudently to hold the coast, when Bassan-nu-goonah takes the Djabin contingent, under Koffee Kalcalli, commander-in-chief. But elsewhere my views, upon this point, have been writ, in the general. Not the lightest charge of reckless and hand-to-mouth statesmanship will be proved against the late Government, when Koffee Kalcalli and the Djabin contingent come harrying and murdering down to Cape Coast Castle, and we find ourselves face to face with another Ashanti war ; the enemy being armed, this time, with breech-loaders, and with cannon served under the instruction of French deserters from Senegal.

But the impulse natural to a man who knows, and has seen, is hurrying me far from Bossoonogo, no generalissimo with us, but a prisoner, meanly esteemed, and struggling against very adverse circumstances. As we came up with my interpreter, a halt sounded for the midday meal. Such a troublesome and wearying march it was in Ashanti, along that forest track, that the men halted each twenty minutes to rest ; but the dinner bugle gave us an hour. I set Yarbro at once to work with the prisoners. My Ashanti gentleman—for such he was beyond all mistake—had a charming face—a handsome one, indeed. People of his race, who boast their blood, are not black at all ; indeed, from one end of Africa to the other, kings and nobles are yellow or bronze, according to my experience. It is the commonest form of abuse among negroes, in Africa, as in America, to call a man "black." The Ashanti gentleman has neither flat nose, nor thick lips, nor ebony skin. To take Bossoonogo as a specimen, he is not darker than many Spaniards, has features of the European cast, and an eye that protrudes in the manner admired by French people, and

called *à fleur de tête*. His dress, even when a prisoner, as I saw him, is a marvel of taste, unequalled since the Roman toga vanished. One single piece of "cloth" it is, a cotton print, home-spun and home-dyed. Your native gentleman, whether from east or west, would not condescend to wear Manchester stuffs ; and he is conspicuously right. To see Bossoonogo was to see a picture of antique grace. It was a marvel how he kept so clean that sheet of cotton, adorned with blue arabesques and flowers on a white ground. Nothing else did he wear by day, except the "breech-clout," fringed with silk, the ends of which fell below his knees. At night he rolled it round him, and so slept ; but the stiffening never went out of it, and its folds were always statuesque. He looked a swell, every inch, bright and wholesome and courteous, though tied by his wrist, and trudging barefoot through the mud.

Whilst I talked with him arrived M. Bonnat, the Frenchman, whom we had rescued from captivity. These two proved to be old acquaintances, but not friends. At sight of the ex-prisoner, Bossoonogo drew himself apart, as it were, the animation vanished from his face, and, in short, he gave the cut polite. Bonnat marched on beside me, and whiled the time with many stories of Ashanti court and camp. From him I learned that Bossoonogo is a very great nobleman indeed, mustering five thousand warriors on occasion. But he is, or was, a courtier, an especial friend of the late king, and, like him, averse from bloodshed. A story is told, however, which shows that Bossoonogo has lots of spirit. His sovereign sent him on a mission to Dahomey, where he saw a girl destined for the royal harem, but still awaiting the summons of her master. Beside the unnumbered wives whom a negro king maintains, there are constantly some hundreds of children in the palace who wait their turn of espousal. These are daughters of important chiefs or allies, sent as hostages in earliest youth, and sealed to the monarch. If they grow up pretty, or they chance to catch the royal eye, they are married ; if not, perhaps they are given to a chief, or they die unnoticed. In any case, it

is high treason to communicate with them. Such a girl Bossoonogo beheld at various ceremonies of the court, and he fell in love with her. There is little to guard a negro harem except the fear of an awful death, and the Ashanti contrived several meetings with his enslaver. On the very day chosen by astrologers and magicians as favouring the royal intent of marrying one wife more, the lady vanished, and with her the Ashanti envoy. He left a train of slaves behind, and heaps of treasure; the first were all tortured and beheaded, the last was confiscated. The Amazons went furiously forth, scouring every road, and sending a crowd of innocents to be massacred in the capital. Hundreds of officials and frontier guards were slain; but Bossoonogo had laid his plans well, and he escaped. Dahomey threatened war and desolation; but nothing came of it. A heavy ransom calmed his soul perhaps; or he found a prettier wife; or he discovered, on inquiry, that the Ashantis would eat him up, should he even succeed in reaching them. Any way, this storm passed over, and the monarchs resumed their friendship.

Bossoonogo's great complaint, when with us, lay in the fact that we ignored his nobility. "See!" he said to Bonnat, "my hands are tied—positively tied with string!—the hands of an Ashanti caboceer!" Bonnat replied with force that his own hands had been tied for six weeks, although he was accused of nothing. It was amusing to observe the caboceer's gesture upon this remark. It plainly said, "You misunderstand my argument. I do not complain of hands-tying in general, but of tying the hands of an Ashanti caboceer. You are nothing better than a merchant. But let it pass!" After this mute protest he went on aloud: "Not only do they treat me thus, but they make me walk with a mere centurion—worse still, with a common warrior whom I do not know. They set a private soldier to guard me. The amirado cannot be aware of this. Tell him who I am, and he will behave to me as a fellow-noble should." Bonnat replied with warmth, detailing his own sufferings when a prisoner of the

Ashanti. Again did Bossoonogo make that gesture, which explained that the cases did not seem parallel to him. Then he said, "I am ill and cannot walk. I am not used to it. My feet ache. Pray the amirado to give me a hammock." This Bonnat declined to do, saying flatly that my gentleman was story-telling, as, no doubt, he was, and the rudeness of the answer may be well excused from a man who had endured the bitterness of death for five years, a prisoner in Coomassie. I understood, also, that Bossoonogo had more than once vented his aristocratic insolence upon the captives. Said Bonnat: "There is nothing the matter with your feet. You want a hammock to show off in, and to get free of your comrades." Then he added to me, "Do you know what will be his first care when he is loosed? The fellow will not rest until he has seen these poor devils without their heads. Why? Because they have seen him humiliated like this." Such is the Negro nature, and I have beheld too much of it to doubt the Frenchman's accusation. But if ever man looked gentle and dignified under cruel words and wretched circumstances, that man was Bossoonogo, when he was called a liar, and refused a hammock. He neither protested nor appealed, but walked on with dignity.

I was delighted with this specimen of negro nobility, and, making my way to Captain Grubbe, I begged that he might have a hammock. There were thousands of carriers returning empty-handed, and in ten minutes they hung a double blanket on a pole. Bossoonogo stepped into his conveyance with a smile to me, and a courteous bow towards the marine; through my interpreter he expressed regret that circumstances over which he had no control forbade him to reward Private Smith for his "uniform consideration," &c. &c. The face of that gallant soldier when he thoroughly mastered this parting shaft of politeness, did one good to see. "Why—why!" he said, "this nigger—he—oh, blow it!" Words would not come to him fitting to describe his sentiments. I saw him again, two days after, at Amoafu, with his remaining captives

still in tow. Private Smith had changed to a thoughtful man ; the sublimity of Ashanti manners had overpowered him.

Another detail M. Bonnat mentioned, which I must not forget. Bossoonogo has a convivial nature, and occasionally takes too much palm toddy. At the moment when he is still so sane as to be aware that his sanity is in danger—but already too far gone to go to bed—he commands red ochre to be brought, and therewith he daubs his forehead ; the hieroglyphics thus traced warn prudent people that he is “on the drink,” and not to be vexed or gainsayed. Would that a like fashion could be introduced among ourselves ! What fights and troubles it would avert ! But we are scarcely prepared to accept these finer phases of Ashanti civilization. Besides, the notion presupposes that one gentleman only gets “on the drink” at a time, for the warning might be disregarded by another in the like state.

I did not witness the end of poor Bossoonogo’s captivity ; it was told to me, however. When we reached the Prah on our return, Sir Garnet ordered his release. Private Smith set free his own charges hurriedly, and rushed to the Kroomen’s camp in search of the caboceer, coming up just as Bossoonogo was hearing the happy news. He smiled gracefully while they cut his bonds, and turned to enter the jungle straightway. Private Smith followed, and gravely, thoughtfully, applied his foot. There was no malice in the act ; it was a vindication of self-respect, performed with conscience. Bossoonogo looked round with sad surprise—and vanished.

NATIVE GENTLEMEN.

II.—DOUROUP.

IN Malay lands the seeker after native gentility finds a choice of types. Every Malay is a gentleman in some senses of the word. He is brave and courteous, he restrains the vulgar outbreak of passion, and is very often truthful. He does not work more than he can help; and abandons to the Chinaman, if possible, all dirty occupations. His person is always cleanly; for the “orang laüt” may be called the stanchest, if least erudite, of Mussulmans. He dresses as well as he can afford—better, indeed, as a rule—and his fashions are manly as graceful. What may be set against these gentlemanly traits of character I shall not here put down; for I am very fond of the Malays, and their demerits do not “come into my brief” at this moment.

After reflection, I do not think of a better example for my case than Douroup, the old executioner of Sarawak. An official of that sort is not regarded with aversion in the Far East; partly, maybe, because the mode of execution is dignified for both parties, and also because such an officer is evidently indispensable. I knew Douroup very well, before he called on me, one morning, in the pretty bungalow which Sir James Brooke had assigned to us for residence. With an air unmatched by pursuivant or chamberlain, he used to stalk upon the rajah’s heels when he took a stroll, shielding that “good white head” with a state-



umbrella. Pleasant to behold was Douroup on these occasions. Unthinking visitors laughed to see him, but I never could perceive the joke. Grave loyalty and self-respectful performance of that which a brave old man regards as honourable duty are not absurd. A sympathetic smile one might allow oneself, but no more.

In picturesque effect Douroup could not be surpassed on these occasions. He had a stature much exceeding the average of his small race, limbs vigorous and sinewy, a thin, hard-featured countenance. His little eyes twinkled sternly under lids triangular, so deeply were they wrinkled; his large mouth was squarely set, like a trap of steel; his broad, bony jaws had an air of well-tried determination. Douroup possessed a snowy beard—what might be called a goatee, and at least two dozen hairs on each side the upper lip. Not even his umbrella of yellow silk and fringed, nor his kris of that special shape which belongs to the executioner, distinguished him more proudly from “the herd.” One Malay in a thousand may possess enough moustache to swear by, but I never saw among that people a beard like Douroup’s. I have his likeness before me as I write; my drawing was photographed by Vernon Heath, of Piccadilly, fourteen years ago. It shows the old man’s figure, upright as a spear, arrayed in pink cotton bajo or jersey, fitting like a glove on his gaunt muscles; petticoat of tartan, red and green, gracefully looped in folds to show the handle of his official kris; trousers snowy white, falling over bony ankles.

Thus arrayed he came to my bungalow, intent to sell a handsome “parang” of native manufacture. I admired and bought the weapon; in fact, it hangs now on my wall, with many another yet more fantastic. The bargain was apparently concluded to Douroup’s satisfaction, for he laughed in grim delight, showing teeth like ebony with prismatic lights upon them.

The blackening is done with the oil of burnt cocoa-nut in early youth, and the foil-like appearance, so startling to new-comers,

may be due to decay or to the immoderate use of penang, as the betel-nut is called by Malays.

He asked if I cared for a Lanun kris, and sent his slave-boy to fetch it, seating himself meanwhile on my invitation. He rolled a "plug" of betel, tobacco, and lime from the bamboo case hanging at his waist, enveloped it in a pepper-leaf, and began to chew gravely.

My interpreter at that time was Ali Kasut, or Ali of the Shoes, so called from his invariable habit of "sporting" that article of luxury. It was nothing less than a superstition with my excellent follower. He had the small and delicate feet of his race, but outspread at the toes by walking barefoot at an age when, of all possible extravagancies, a boot would have seemed to Ali the most absurd. This formation made him difficult to fit. No lady's shoe, such as he loved, could be too small, or too slender, or too high at the instep, but his prehensile toes demanded almost greater breadth to work in than would be needful for an Irish giant. Ali overcame this difficulty by slitting up the front part of the boot at either side. Thus he allowed his toes fair play, quite indifferent to appearances or utility.

Whilst the executioner surveyed me with dignity and decorum, Ali observed, "This Lanun kris at fight of rainbow betakenbe."

I should observe that my interpreter was a much-travelled man, who had dwelt at Brunei and Johore, where people who respect themselves talk "pangeran," or court Malay. The peculiarity of this speech is a redundancy of prefixes and affixes, which are used with the most delicate discrimination. Though, I believe, much more correct, it bears no greater resemblance to the common form of words than does classic Greek to Romaic, and in a very few generations it will become a dead language. Meanwhile Ali Kasut rejoiced in his accomplishment, and transferred the theory of it to English when addressing persons of importance. He told me once that the reason he did not understand great "tuans" when they spoke together, whilst he could follow easily the con-

versation of stray sailors and such like, was because the former spoke pangeran English, and he naturally concluded that the great difference lay in prefixes and affixes. Whence his mode of speech.

I supposed that a kind of mythological relic was to be offered me. "The kris must be very old," I said gravely.

"Oh, old. Malay man like swords olden—fifty years perhaps-be."

"And who took it?"

"He there!" the interpreter answered, pointing to Douroup.

"What!" I exclaimed. "He has fought a rainbow?"

"Tidak! Lanun man he rainbow foughtenby. Douroup he rainbow withum."

I concluded that the weapon on its way had been drawn in sacrilegious assault of that aerial phenomenon. Douroup chewed with respectful indifference. He did not seem to take any special pride in the recollection of his victorious efforts on behalf of the rainbow.

"Was anybody hurt?" I asked, keeping my countenance.

"Lanun all killedness, but some betakenbe."

"So perish all who would attack the beneficent powers! What punishment did the rainbow inflict on those betakenbe?"

"They shotum! Rajah in Englander. He hearum madness."

"What?"

"Yes. Rajah Mudah, Captain Brooke you know, left hereaway. Old rajah in Englandness very angry when teldful. He want Lanun man alive."

It suddenly flashed upon my bewilderment that the Rainbow in question was a gunboat, which had several times been engaged with Lanun pirates. Doubtless Douroup had captured his kris in such an action. I asked for details, and my interpreter was rapidly turning the narrative into pangeran English when the executioner's boy came back.

He carried a weapon of beautiful shape and temper, nearly two feet long in the blade, and an inch and a half wide, waving in graceful twists almost to the tip. The edges were sharp and bright, but an inch-broad strip of rough metal ran between them, deeply channelled and damascened. This peculiar effect is obtained, I believe, by welding hard metal into soft, and then eating into the latter with acids. The hilt was covered with silver wire, twined and plaited to imitate different sizes of string. This simple but tasteful style of ornamentation is much affected by Malay silversmiths.

Before coming to terms with the executioner for this specimen of piratic art, I begged to hear the tale hanging to it. Ali Kasut's idiom was droll, but it did not help to the clear comprehension of a story. I had need of more patience than could be asked of the most courteous reader. Done into vulgar English, Douroup's tale ran thus. I tell it in the first person, and I "colour" it a little, for the narrative reached me in a very bald state. The facts, of course, are historical.

"Two years ago," said the executioner—this adventure came to my ears in 1863—"my wife, my brother's son, and I were returning from a visit to Talang Talang, where my sons had a contract for turtle-eggs. What little wind there was did not favour us, but the rajah had sent for me. We paddled and paddled. Just opposite to Tanjong Api, a large prau came suddenly in view, running fast alongshore with a stiff breeze. I said to my wife, 'If a man had been sailing thus across Sarawak Bay upon the morning we were married, his heart would have died within him at sight of a vessel like that.' She said, 'Thanks to Allah and the white rajah, no pirates dare come here!'

"The prau skimmed in like a shark. When we looked again there were two more behind it; when we looked a third time there were seven in sight, all flying towards us. My wife said, 'Thirty years have passed since our wedding-day, and Allah is merciful; but I wish we stood all safe ashore at Santubong!' We turned

the canoe and paddled for life. One after another the praus came round Tanjong Api until the bay was crowded with them. We set sail, but they flew. Within an hour the Balignini trained a jingal on us, but the ball fell short. I said to my wife, 'Will you live to be a pirate's slave?' 'Kill me,' she said. We went on with sail and paddle, but it seemed hopeless.

"Suddenly the 'Badger' gunboat appeared, steering down the river with all sails set. We shouted and embraced each other, for sure the Balignini would clear off at sight of a gunboat. But they did not notice. The foremost prau fired again, and the ball took off Kassim's head. He fell upon my wife, nearly upsetting the canoe.

"The 'Badger' held on, steering between us, but she could not have arrived in time. A great black prau swept towards us on the wind. Her bows were shaped as a dragon's head, and the white water looked like teeth in her jaws. The pearl of two immense natuna shells made eyes. From their fighting-deck the pirates yelled at us, but fired no more. The reis of the 'Badger' saw our distress and discharged a twelve-pound gun. The shot flashed from wave to wave and buried itself half a mile beyond. But the warning was enough. The Balignini stood dumfounded for an instant, their silk scarves fluttering in the breeze, then shook their weapons at the gunboat with a sudden gleam like fire. They ran up and down their fighting-deck, and chanted their war-song, but they turned, all the fleet firing as they went. The little 'Badger' followed till afternoon, when the swift pirates had all vanished. They quitted Sarawak waters, and at Port Sirik caught a lot of British subjects—Indians. And at Port Malludu they met a fleet of Lanuns from Sulu, and cruised in company till part of them went home.

"I buried Kassim at Kuching, and my wife did not long survive the fright. The rajah consoled me, but I made spells for the Balignini. Allah, the All-Merciful, saw my distress.

"After the New Year's feast, the rajah sent me to Muka, where

I had kinsfolk. My heart was water, and grief had dried my marrow. One day a boat came flying up the river; fear sat upon the faces of the crew. They brought a message for Tuan Helms.¹ Six Lanun praus, lying in the bay, challenged him to come and fight. The people fainted; their cry rang to heaven. Tuan Helms summoned the chief men. We met in the fort, and the tuan spoke to us. He said, 'The Rajah Mudah is lying at Bintulu with the "Rainbow." Here is a letter; who will carry it?'

"The Datus looked to the ground in thought, for across the river mouth lay six pirate vessels, swift as eagles. Twenty men kept watch on each of them night and day. Tuan Helms said, 'I cannot go, for my hands are soft and white, unused to paddle. But you are nobles and chiefs, skilful on the water. The people feed you, and they faint in alarm. Who will go?'

"They did not speak, and he said again, 'The man who does it will be honoured amongst all the orang laüt; the Rajah Mudah will set him on high. Your forefathers were brave. They did not fear death. Have their sons become women?'

"I rose and spoke: 'These men of Muka are not my people, oh tuan! But I hear the helpless ones who cry. Give me a fast canoe, and I will carry the letter.'

"They found me the swiftest boat in Muka, the 'Anak Ular' (young snake), which had won every race on New Year's feast. At dusk I set out. The imaun laid it upon all the faithful that they should pray the saints to intercede for me all night. Every house in Muka had its candle burning, and the murmur of prayers reached Allah's throne. He heard them. His hand drew clouds across the sky, and opened the sluices of the rain. All through the evening it fell softly, and the Lanun scouts lay close.

"In an hour and a half, for I reconnoitred at each turning of the stream, I saw open water and the praus. They lay anchored,

¹ Manager at that time, and still, I trust, for the Borneo Company.

four across the bar, and one beneath each bank, lit up as for a feast. The rolling waves glittered for a hundred yards around. Big fires blazed on shore also. Canoes came and went. At the bows of every vessel a crowd of pirates sat or moved, black against the light, and on the fighting-deck above stood the sentries. Roaring laughter echoed in faint bursts across the surge, with singing, and sharp screams of pain.

"I knew not what to do. After an hour's waiting, the mirth and the confusion only grew. If I could safely approach the fires ashore, and appear to start from thence, it seemed likely I might get through unnoticed, for there were many boats like mine passing to and fro.

"My heart was dry as an empty kernel when I stole across the river, and dropped down under shadow of the bank. The noise grew louder and louder in my ears, the light more dangerous. Suddenly, at the spit, I came on a throng of canoes which the Lanuns had surprised. There should be one sentry, at least, over them. Long I peered into the dark, and at length perceived him sitting under a tree. Not an alligator could have floated past and he not see it, in that blaze of light. I drew back, landed, and crept behind him like a serpent. The sweat poured off me. At length I reached the tree, rose up, and found he was asleep.

"Weh! I could have killed the dog. My kris was in my hand, and I know where the life divides under a man's shoulder. But it was dark beneath the trees. My hand might miss: he might cry. I took the spear beside him, and hung a cloth upon it, before his eyes. Then I quickly regained my canoe, passed without notice, and drew as close to the fire as I dared.

"There were dozens of men round it, slaves tied to trees, and pirates. A big Lanun was singing and beating the tom-tom; his sarong and head-handkerchief glittered with gold. There were women, too, attending on them. I took my paddle and steered boldly out, to pass between the farthest vessels towards Bintulu.

At that moment I knew of a truth that Allah heard our prayers, for the rain descended suddenly in a great splash, and the camp broke up, laughing and shouting. Those on board also ran to cover, all except the sentries above. I dared not look up, but as I passed along I felt they were watching me.

"I hoped to slip between the third and fourth praus, which were very large, carrying eighty warriors at least. Then would come the moment of danger. The beating of my heart sounded louder than the rattling of the rain. As I passed between, looking out for cables, I saw again that black dragon's head and the big pearl eyes. The paddle almost slipped from my hand. At that instant the sentries hailed. I could frame no words to answer, but pulled with all my might. They rushed and trampled over the deck, seeking their guns, which had been placed under cover. They shouted for a canoe, and I heard them vaulting into it from above.

"The 'Anak Ular' never made a race like that, with Lanun balls spitting round her, and the clank of Lanun paddles in her wake. But at ten yards' distance I was out of sight, so sheeted fell the rain. When it ceased, twenty minutes after, there was no boat on the sea but mine. I spread my wet carpet, and bowed myself times seventy-seven.

"In a day and a half I reached Bintulu. The Rajah Mudah gave me honour before all the people. Then he whitened the steamer, deck and funnel, got up fires with dry wood, and started. We hoped to find the praus still lying before Muka. But some foolish youths there, catching a party of scouts, sent one of them back with defiance to say the 'Rainbow' was at hand. So they broke up at once, half putting to sea, half skirting the coast, in hopes to hide when they saw the steamer's smoke on the horizon. So had they often escaped the English cruisers. But our Rajah Mudah knew their tricks, and all the coast was afire. A swift boat came to warn him, and we held alongshore, where each village sent us news or signalled. For such insults as that of the

Balignini a year before, and now this of the Lanuns, had not been dreamt of in Sarawak since the rajah chastised them.

"After two days' search we came upon three praus, making for the open water. They saw that no safety could be found along shore, nor did they recognize the steamer till too late for most of them, for she made no smoke, and the whitening deceived the dogs. Weh! the Lanuns are seamen! They turned back, flying like hawks. The 'Rainbow' is swift, but she could never have caught them had the wind been fair. We got within range, and they dodged and twisted, swinging the big praus round as on a pivot. His Highness himself trained the guns, but could not hit those magic craft. 'Go ahead, full speed!' he cried at last; 'give them the stem!'

"We went ahead—we whizzed through the sea. The shore lay only two miles off or so. The Lanuns saw what was meant. In their silks and gold cloths they gathered on the fighting-deck, a gallant show, and chanted their war-song. We came up to the first through a storm of bullets. The bowsprit pierced that crowd of men. We saw a hell of faces just beneath, flashing crises, pistols smoking. The slaves screamed below, the pirates yelled above. A shock and a grating noise! The prau went down cut in two. Then it was fighting hand to hand. They swarmed along the bowsprit, swords in teeth. They leaped and clung upon our taffrail. We met them. 'To the next!' cried his Highness, whilst we fought, and 'Aye, aye, sir!' Tuan Hewat shouted back. The decks had been scarcely cleared when another prau was overtaken. Only few of us could reach the forecastle in time, and fifty warriors at least leaped aboard. It was well that the Rajah Mudah had embarked a hundred trusty warriors at Bintulu, for the Lanuns fought as they and fiends of Eblis only can.

"'Go ahead!' his Highness cried, in the midst of it, and we went ahead. Half our deck was held by pirates. They fell, one by one, amok to the last, but the third prau escaped among the

shallows. We sent a few shots after it whilst steaming away, and killed a great chief. Our people watched, and not a man who landed was alive in half an hour. But the worst of them kept the sea in a small boat, and when the 'Rainbow' had passed by they fled safely to their homes in Sulu.

"We stopped only to pick up swimming slaves, but lost several orang laüt on that duty. For the Lanuns beckoned and cried pitifully, keeping their arms under water. When a man reached to save one of them he stabbed or threw his arms about him, and dragged him out, and sank, so that we helped no one who could not pull himself on board by a rope.

"In the night some of the slaves told us what rich plunder had been sent to the bottom of the sea. His Highness said, laughing, 'If any of you orang laüt like to jump aboard the last prau, and take what you can, I give you leave!' 'And white men, too, sir?' asked the tuan engineer. 'Every one but Captain Hewat,' said his Highness; 'he will get his reward from Government!' Next morning we caught the rest of the pirate fleet, and fired no shot, but steered into them. The first prau and the second we ran down without much loss. When it came to the last it was the dragon craft! I crawled out on the bowsprit, as did others, but they fell, splash, splash! before the Lanun fire. The 'Rainbow' spun along, and when she almost touched the pirate vessel, the tuan engineer came crushing through our men, swung himself on the bowsprit, and forced by me. We shot into the thickest of the Lanuns.

"Weh, tuan! I thought the Afreets had my body! They now pressed too close to strike. The white man tumbled amongst them with a shout, snatching here a golden-hilted kris, there a jewelled dagger. I got nothing but a stab in the arm—see!—and this Sulu blade which I offer to you, tuan. Look you, the tuan engineer was very big and stout. The Lanun man could not hold against his weight. He secured two handfuls of fine things in an instant, and then down, down we went, as if to the



very bottom of the sea. And what will you give me for the kris, tuan?"

I forget what I gave him, but his story seemed cheap at the price. The kris hangs in a place of honour on my wall.

NATIVE GENTLEMEN.

III.—DON HILARIO.

THE gentleman, I take it, does not flourish in semi-civilized communities. We have discovered him amongst savages, and he is daily visible in Europe ; but amongst people neither barbarous nor cultured he will be sought in vain. The late attempt to murder General Barrios has brought back to memory my travels in Central America, which were coincident with that chief's first deposition and romantic return. Whilst recalling my knowledge of him, I kept my mind open for reminiscences of a "gentleman" hailing from those parts, but none turned up. Some pleasant comrades and a few good fellows crossed my path in the republics ; but none who properly fall under the definition. They had neither style nor simplicity, their courage was not chivalrous, whilst their generosity was affected. But the story of Barrios has brought back to me the image of Don Hilario G., whose connexion with it is shown in the pages following. Whatever strangers might think, Don Hilario was held by his countrymen, before they knew his crime, to be a model of graces, honour, and patriotism. Terms are comparative. My third instance of a native gentleman presents a type esteemed by the Latin races under a certain condition of progress, but no ideal for us of the north. I have used a licence which may be pardoned in making my host tell the tale of his own deed ; the real fact is that we

departed after dinner, quite unsuspecting the interest which was shortly to grow around him.

I was riding with a number of companions from Granada de Nicaragua towards Leon, bent partly on pleasure, and partly on government service. We were provided with a strong recommendation to Don Hilario, from the municipal council of Granada. It became necessary to apply to him for horses and a guide, so one afternoon we rode up to the hacienda. A large plantation of cacao surrounded it, then a field of tobacco, then a high wall of sun-dried bricks. The house itself was small but defensible, standing in the midst of a courtyard. A wooden verandah, cracked and gaping with dry heat, ran round two sides; from the middle thereof descended a flight of clattering steps, rough-hewn with the axe, and ignorant of paint. There had once been a tower above the great gate, and a covered way from it to the upper storey, in which doubtless the inhabitants hoped to make a stand if the wall were forced; but it had fallen outwards, and blocked the main entrance.

The court, never levelled or unturfed, bore a ragged crop of hay, and a harvest of broken bottles, potsherds, bits of leather, hides stretched to dry, old barrels, every kind of rubbish except paper. In brick recesses below the covered way, heaps of maize-shucks revealed the peon's sleeping-place. All along the house-wall stood cacao in heaps, set out to dry in rude baskets; round a pile of the fruit, still crimson, two or three Indians lazily cracked the big nuts, and gossiped drowsily as they tore out the kernels. Where a few palm-trees leaned their glittering heads above the wall, a little group of panting mules crushed together, for the air swam with heat.

Don Hilario had gone to visit a neighbour, but he was expected shortly. No representative was there to ask us in, so we stretched our rugs, and lay down in the verandah, smoking. The cicalas sang without intermission, a quavering whirl of sound which lulled one to sleep. From time to time a peon down below cried

sharply, "Altro Indio!"—another Indian!—and one of his comrades forthwith struck up some melody, nasal and monotonous, which overpowered the insect clamour. Very soon we all dozed off, for the journey had been long. Our nap was broken by the twang of a guitar; I raised myself, and beheld a tall, slender man seated on the steps, who could be only Don Hilario. He motioned me down, rather as one motions to a dog which seems about to jump, and then, finishing the prelude with a flourish, he began to sing. His voice was not bad, and it had been carefully trained, but the man's gestures would have spoiled any music. His face might have been pleasing enough, had he left it quiet. Features long and very dark; eyes black as ink, both pupil and iris slightly protruding, and shiny without brilliance; beard and hair long, thick, and perfectly straight, showed Indian blood. He rolled in his seat, threw up his eyes and his guitar, banged it and twanged it, half rose, dropped with a thump of despair, played in fact all the most fantastic of those tricks which musical rapture seems to provoke. Displeased with the reception, I lay and laughed without concealment, and my friends, all awake, did likewise.

The minstrel did not pay attention. When his song finished, with a sudden jerk, he gravely addressed the circumambient air. "To my mistress," he said, looking straight before him, "I dedicate this fragment of my soul!—Senors, at your service!" Thereupon, rising briskly, he shook hands all round, and offered his house, his servants, his wife and children—he had none—for our "disposition," hung his guitar upon the wall, kissed it fondly, and shouted for a chair. A ragged Indian girl brought it, and he sat down. "'Cré grédin!" muttered old Barbachella, and threw himself flat upon his rug. So did we, but Don Hilario did not seem to notice that he alone had a seat. "We want horses and a guide," said Barbachella; "here is a letter for you." He held it forth, without rising, and the don took it gracefully. "Everything," he answered, "everything here is yours!"

"Then we should like dinner," said some one, and with extreme good-will our host shouted for tortillas and chilés—oat-cakes and pepper. It was too much. We rose in one bound, and our French comrade, white with passion, began an address of the extremest frankness.

"What!" interrupted Don Hilario, "these gentlemen are English? Why did I not know? I would have welcomed them with a song of their own country—The Last Rose of Summer, or Yankee Doodle, or what they will. Let me do so now, with ten million apologies. Five years I spent in England when a boy, but never, never could I learn the beautiful tongue of Shakespeare, of Dickens, of—of others. Dinner? It shall be presently, suddenly; and we will have punch. Meanwhile I shall sing to you." He did. Words were vain. He motioned us to our couches, snatched his guitar, and recommenced the antics of his earlier performance. We had his whole English *repertoire* in succession. The man possessed talent assuredly. Forgetting now and then both melody and words, he improvised the continuation without a break. We laughed long and loud, but he did not hear.

After half an hour's endurance, Barbachella, who had small taste for music, rose to stop the songster. Don Hilario also rose, and trotted up and down, the Gaul pursuing. One twanged and sung, the other swore and snatched; and we laughed. Just as Barbachella brought the fun to a crisis by bodily seizing the infuriated musician, the ragged girl announced dinner, and thus prevented a quarrel. Instantly relaxing his austere brow, Don Hilario led the way into a ruinous chamber, where, upon naked boards, roast pork, chickens, and tortillas were displayed.

We sat upon boxes, and fell to; our host behaving with such ceremony as is proper at a banquet of princes. After the pork and the chickens appeared the punch—a flaming compound of aguardiente, or cane-spirit, limes, guava jelly, and orange-flowers. It was potent, but agreeable, and Don Hilario drank deep.

Presently he bounded to seek his guitar, but I vowed that singing is destructive after punch, no better than suicide for the throat. At first the trusting don was inconsolable, but it was suggested to him that as things had gone so far, he had best carry them farther and take another bowl. So he did, and immediately afterwards he began telling us his *affaires du cœur*, which were numerous and varied. Then he became patriotic, and mourned with tears the decadence of his native land. "What a difference you must observe," he said, "between Granada, or even our Leon, and your capitals! Ah, Paris! ah, London! But wait awhile, senors. The despots are driven out, and the traitors are dead. Enough! What are they talking of at Granada?"

"They are talking," said Barbachella, "of the banishment of Barrios, and the assassination of Palacios in Realejo."

"They may talk, the white-hearted Aristos! Who shot Palacios, think they?"

"Nothing is known yet, but that the man came from San Salvador."

"He did not—he did not! I'll tell you the secret, my friends. Did he die instantly?"

"Palacios? No, the bullet broke his jaw, but he will recover."

"No, no, no! I saw his head fall on the table, and the blood pouring through his hair. The dog is dead—dead!"

"Tell us how you did it," said Barbachella quietly.

Don Hilario had been drinking glass after glass of the compound. His eyes, bright as a bead of jet, had grown filmy; his hair had fallen in lank locks across them, wet with perspiration. He looked round at us, scarcely seeing, and spoke with a bitter enthusiasm.

"Barrios was my friend," he said. "To me he confided his aims and his devoted hopes. The Liberals of Guatemala knew that he meant to expose their shams and trickery, and they called him an Aristo. The Aristos hated him as bitterly. They would

have killed him had they dared. Their ladrones caught him at night, and carried him to Istapa. Not an Indian but would have died for Barrios, but he was gagged, and no one saw him. So he was sent away. Three months since he tried to return, and in our waters, at Realejo of Nicaragua, this filibuster Palacios boards the vessel, with our police at his heels, takes out Barrios, and thrusts him into our prison. What would they say in Europe, if the Comte de Chambord, returning home, were seized in a German ship at Manchester by English policemen, ordered by a French officer, who imprisoned him in Manchester jail? That was what Palacios did, and our Government, corrupted by his gold, approves the act. What became the patriot's duty? I knew. Some of our politicians talked big, others wrote protests—I shot Palacios."

With unsteady hand he poured himself a mug of punch, and went on. We looked at one another in some bewilderment.

"He was living at Realejo, to keep his victim in sight. Palacios is rich, but he took a little house by the jail, and scarcely quitted it. Half-a-dozen bullies came from Guatemala, and he thought himself safe under their protection. It was a small Indian house, with fruit-trees about it, and the window which looked towards the jail had a grenadita bush overhanging. There Palacios sat all day watching, and there he sat at night writing lies, spinning webs like a spider. His Guatemalans were never off guard. One lay under this window, one under that at back; two lounged before the door, and two slept—always it was so, day or night.

"I tried to bribe the Guatemalans, but they almost killed my messenger. Night after night I hung around the hut in shadow of the jail, spying where I might get a shot; but the grenadita bush fell across the window. Through its branches I could see Palacios sitting under his lamp, but nowhere could I get a certain aim. Then I thought of waylaying him with an air-gun, but that would have been cowardly, senors. It occurred to me also to fire

the thatch, but there would have been much risk of failure, and besides, that sort of thing is brutal, like a Guatemalan. I wished to meet my enemy face to face, and shoot him, to fire through the window."

"Gran Dios!" we ejaculated breathlessly. Barbachella laughed; twenty years in Nicaragua had made him cynical.

"There was one Guatemalan," Don Hilario continued—and his eyes wandered, his speech came thicker—"who was more dog-like than the rest, an Indian pure-blood. He came one day to Dr.—what's his name, the American? I know him like my brother, but his name escapes me. And he complained of being bewitched. The doctor—what is he called?—he laughed, as he always does, and told the brute that the pretty girl at the wine-shop had bewitched him, intending a joke. Mad was the Indian, and he vowed by his gods to kill her. The doctor, alarmed, gave her warning, but she is a brave girl, and ridiculed the Guatemalan rowdy. I said to her, 'Frighten him. Say you will come at night and torment him, if he threatens you!' She told him that, and more. He vowed he would shoot her when she came, but Tita only laughed, and said bullets could do a witch no harm.

"'Then I'll use steel!' said the brute."

"*Ce bon peuple!*" muttered Barbachella bitterly.

"A night or two afterwards it was this dog's turn to watch beneath the window—a misty, drizzly night; Palacios' lamp was shining through that cursed grenadita, and I heard the Guatemalan growling below it. I slipped out from the shadow of the jail, with a white cloth round me, and cried, 'Psist!' like a girl. The creature came at that rag like a bull; I had but just time to fall back, roll it, throw it in the high grass, and dodge him, slipping away to the right. Luck was with me. For the jailer's wife had hung her linen out to dry, and forgotten it till that very moment. The Guatemalan saw her figure dimly, with the white clothes on her back which she was carrying in, and bounded at her growling. Before he could strike, I stood at the window, looking Palacios in

the face, as he sat writing—only the glass betwixt my gun and him. I'll cut my hand off, if he's not dead!"

"Then cut it off, assassin!" cried one of our party; "for Palacios will recover!"

"What's that, athathin? Wath Brututh athathin? Where'th guitar? A compothed thong about Brututh—want thing it."

His head fell on the table, as dead, to all seeming, as did his victim's. We saddled our horses and went away. Don Hilario was accused, some weeks after, of the famous attempt to murder Palacios; and in the charge against him were just these facts I have narrated. What with the enthusiasm born of music, the warmth instilled by patriotic communism, and the frankness brought out by punch, he made too many confidants. Don Hilario fled the country, and I know not what became of him. Don Enrique Palacios recovered, as all know who feel interest in Central American affairs; and Barrios, after some months' honourable captivity, was dismissed to try his luck again. Be sure he avoided Realejo next time. The jailer's wife had little hurt, if I remember correctly.

THE PROSE OF WARFARE.

THE romance of war is ever before us, tricked out in gold and steel, clanging in brazen music, sung by poets, and dreamed by youth. Uniform has still a fascination for beauty, and still rouses a jealous envy in the breasts of civil adolescents. There is, in truth, a something which distinguishes the soldier and gentleman, if he be worthy of that title—an air of self-reliance and command well fitted to impress the enthusiastic. Seeing a fine regiment on the march, its ordered sweep apparently so irresistible, the pomp and pride and circumstance of glorious war, one can hardly recall that “seamy side” of the beautiful array which is familiar to one who has beheld campaigns. It seems unnatural almost to suppress the thrill which makes every heart beat, and to mutter that war is a dirty business.

But so it is, in truth. For ages past moralists have been denouncing its iniquity, but we are not concerned with their high view. The prose, not the wickedness, of campaigning is our theme. Its very spirit is opposed to civilization, and the more we perfect either the wider becomes their divergence. Thus, while cleanliness has grown almost to a superstition, whilst boards, and vestries, and sanitary commissions are sweeping every corner, the practice, if not the theory of war, tends more and more to oppose their principles. When men or nations go to fight they return toward the habits of their ancestors; and the further they have advanced beyond them, the more painful the fall. Most people

unconsciously imagine a battle-field as all heroes and smoke, chivalry and corpses, horrid but magnificent to see. Horses prance without intermission, swords flourish, feathers glimmer and toss, every one strikes an attitude, even the dead. Single combats are transacted from time to time with grace and celerity ; each officer, if not each man, upon the field has a chance to display his individual prowess.

A doleful contrast does this picture bear to the truth. There was a time when it had some resemblance possibly, but that was long ago. A modern fight is not grand to see, whether from near or far. To the spectator watching from a balloon it must look like a struggle of ants, moving in dark masses amidst smoke, no insect distinguishable from another. Some drop inexplicably and lie still, others trickle back. A crackling sound, low yet angry, threatening and incessant, mounts to his ears, broken by dull thuds each second, and shattering peals like an express train passing high in air. Presently one serried block disperses, breaks to atoms, and goes forward with a run, or vanishes into space. To a spectator standing on the ground sights still less heroic are presented. Round him are grimy figures, lying still, or writhing, or pushing on, with eyes that burn in their black faces, and dry mouths agape. The earth is covered with dirty rags. Over these men go in a body, and vanish behind the canopy of smoke. Achilles himself could not play the demigod upon a modern field ; by times he would have to lie down beside Thersites, and take the bullet where it struck him, probably in his back. Did he spring at the foe as he used to do upon the "ringing plains of Troy," he would be shot by an enemy invisible and anonymous lying some thousand yards away ; or, if he escaped that risk, would be broken by court-martial for exposing his myrmidons. In the ordinary chances of a campaign the utmost bravery that a man can show is to stay still, not to seek death, but to wait for it, confounded with myriads of others, his individuality repressed. In truth this is grander than to rush up and down, smiting and

smitten. Almost any troops will advance to meet an enemy ; the test comes when they have to stand, or rather to lie, and endure his fire. But all this is quite the reverse of melodramatic.

The invention of fire-arms, as was perceived at first, was perdition to the romance of battle ; but the heaviest stroke was dealt when armies began to disregard the weather. Long after civilization had advanced so far that roads and bridges were passable in spite of rain, generals lay quiet if they could make that excuse. At the earliest decent opportunity they retired into winter quarters, and stopped therein as late as possible. War was still a pastime for the great, and they liked to play it comfortably. By the system of winter quarters they were able to enjoy during several months the glory they had won in the campaign past, to revisit the Court, with all their blushing honours thick upon them, to see their wives or mistresses, recruit their purse, and get a new outfit. Soldiers also could sell the plunder they had gained, furbish their arms and uniforms, or buy fresh. With such long rests the officers could keep themselves tolerably neat, and the slow movements enabled them to enjoy all the luxuries obtainable in the country.

That is changed. Troops march nowadays, be the weather what it may, and do not lie up until the latest possible moment. The Russian army carried with it an amount of baggage to astonish foreign critics, but before it even reached Bucharest the officers were woefully shabby and their men ragged. The white cotton tunics, of which every officer carries four, enabled them to keep up a decent appearance before they actually met the foe ; but on the march washing is impossible, and they had either to resume the faded colourless stuffs of winter or to go in vile raiment. As for the soldiers, their uniform was brown alike, whether cotton or cloth, before they reached the Danube.

Russians are certainly the filthiest of Europeans, but Englishmen would be puzzled to keep themselves much cleaner than did these in the same case. Movements in modern war are swift,

and the enormous consumption of artillery stores, the increased regard shown towards the wounded and towards private property, forbid much use of transport for unimportant matters like clothing. A man must wear what he has until it drops to pieces ; nor is it certain that he will get more even then, since naked warriors can use a rifle just as briskly as the most dandified of guardsmen. But there are results of dirt much worse than spoilt uniforms, more disgusting almost than camp diseases. There is no method of avoiding these ; but if the hair and beard be shaved quite off, some struggle may be made against them. English peers worth the revenue of a grand duchy were driven to this in the Crimea ; but Russians submit to the worse infliction. Young gentlemen who enthusiastically implore the Fates that they may " like a soldier fall " have not heard, probably, what a soldier must put up with first. We doubt not that there were luckless heroes before Plevna who had not their wretched clothes off for a month, or more than that. A man cannot undress at night when he has only a great coat to shield him from the wet and cold. Even the correspondent, who may take shelter where he can get it, often passes a week or twice of that before finding an opportunity to undress, if he have no change with him. But he can wash at least, a luxury oft-times forbidden to the soldier during many days.

On the late march to Candahar it was so bitterly cold of a morning that those who could not obtain hot water deferred washing till they reached camp. I remember breakfasting with a battery—nothing short of tortures would induce me to name it. Moist sugar was handed round without a spoon. " Stay, stay ! " cried the captain to one just helping himself with his fingers, " let C—— serve it out. He has washed his hands ; I saw him ! " But in some respects cleanliness is carried to a point almost ridiculous in an English camp. How this extreme decency is to be kept up without using the cat I do not perceive. The topic was not mentioned in late debates, but no offence entailed such frequent floggings.

The whole tendency of modern war is towards making it a business, or the most prosaic of professions. The gay old uniforms are vanishing, epaulettes have gone, or are mocked by worsted imitations. The cheapest and plainest material is chosen for the soldier, who once had the finest and most glittering. Time was when the danger of the battle-field was balanced in some shape by the prizes—*le premier roi fut un soldat heureux*—and no survivor of the fight but had his chance of fortune. That again is changed. Prize-money is still recognized, but individual looting is called theft, and treated accordingly. The utmost that superhuman bravery can earn is a cross, with a few pounds per annum attached to it, and a step in the service. Most certainly this is nobler reward than those current in old time, but it is vastly more commonplace. In days of chivalry glory was supplemented by the ransom of a vanquished foe, the gift of provinces subdued, and other perquisites. That was the time of which poets think when composing the lays so very inappropriate to modern warfare. Then the hero concerned himself but little with prosaic duties such as fall to his successor. Drilling was conducted by non-commissioned officers, or, at least, by persons of a rank lower than his own. A noble colonel appointed his favourite lackey or the son of his unpaid tailor or his mistress, to a company in the regiment, and such people did what was thought needful. Our elder novelists commonly represent the "captain" much as they represent the "parson" of the time—a creature of no importance, useful chiefly to cut jokes upon. Regimental duty is killing to the romance of a soldier's life.

If a campaign were all one battle, as some appear to imagine fondly, the "seamy side" would not be so bad. But it is rather one march through mud or dust, with hunger, dirt, fatigue, and petty duties for its commonplace accidents. The immense majority of soldiers when they leave the service cannot boast of one adventure that has not been shared by a thousand comrades. Our own army, indeed, has peculiar advantages in this respect.

The smallness of its force and the size of our Empire leave English soldiers a greater chance than others have of showing individuality ; but we speak of campaigns and armies in general. What a dismal life is that of the Russian officer, for instance, unless his regiment be ordered to Central Asia, or unless he belong to the rich nobility. Quartered always at one little town or another, each varying from the last only in its greater dulness, as he thinks ; with the smallest pay possible and the remotest prospect of advancement ; without intellectual resources probably, or means of enjoying if he possess them ; without cash to take a furlough, and without society in his garrison town—what life could be more wretchedly prosaic ? It would be impossible to officer Continental armies or to fill their ranks without conscription nowadays. With the romance of battle, the “gewgaws” and the trumpery, a great deal more has gone than appears at first sight.

Among the ideas cherished by a small band of utilitarian philanthropists is one which deprecates humanity in war. With the best intentions possible, these theorists would increase the agony of the wounded, unkindly use the prisoner, and deprive the dying of hope. They would suppress medical service and chaplains, repeal the Geneva Convention, make the establishment of aid societies a breach of neutral duty, and proclaim hospital stores contraband of war. By this, they think, the nations would be horrified into abjuring strife. Face to face with the suffering unspeakable of a campaign, and forbidden to relieve it, the peoples would rise like one man, and declare eternal peace. The notion does not lack argument to sustain it, but it goes too far, or not far enough. Experience does not teach us that savages are restrained from war by the view of agonies infinitely more terrible than the worst that an European army has to fear—for prolonged torture is not the common result even of a shell wound, and the vanquished who escape injury are safe. It was different formerly when foes met along the Danube. Michel the Brave, the epic

hero of Roumania, impaled the whole Turkish army surviving after his triumph, and roasted the officers alive; but the war continued, still more bitter.

Cruelty may sometimes daunt a foe, but it makes him desperate. When there were sixty offences in our statute-book which entailed the pain of death on the transgressor, an epidemic of crime seized the people. In any museum may be noticed weapons of awful terror, serrated spears which could not possibly be drawn back without tearing flesh to rags, and dragging out the bone, javelins made to break off in the wound, swords, like the *kris* of Malays, which cut as they thrust. All these ingenious contrivances are calculated to increase pain, and to ensure death by mortification. But the use and knowledge of them do not lead to peace. On the contrary, the people who invent them give their whole mind to fighting. Upon the other hand, if it be true humanity to make war as cruel as possible, why not massacre prisoners, torture the wounded, and mutilate the dead? By utilitarian logic we are led to this conclusion. It is not much worse to kill a man than to leave him to die, nor are any torments more cruel than the agonies of thirst, the plague of vermin in summer upon open wounds, or the throbs of winter frost.

It may be urged that arguments drawn from savage life are not applicable to civilized people, that the Negro, or the Chinaman, for instance, has less imagination, and, with lower vitality, less actual pain. This may possibly be true, but the classic Greek was at least as highly gifted as the best of us, and he showed no mercy nor expected any; the vanquished hoplite was killed as a matter of course, whether wounded or hale, and those to whom quarter had been formally granted fell into brutal slavery. But the state of Hellas was one of incessant war.

After making every allowance for exaggeration, and subtracting a great deal of downright falsehood, it remains, unhappily, certain that acts of infamous cruelty were performed upon the wounded by the Turkish soldiers in the Bulgarian districts. The

evidence of eye-witnesses is conclusive. I saw the bodies of Ghourko's men laid out for burial, headless, gashed, and mutilated. Other cases are not so well substantiated ; but one proved atrocity makes others probable. The gentleman who saw "crowds of Bashi-Bazouks" swarming out of Plevna behind the regulars, for no purpose apparently but to massacre the wounded, had wonderful field-glasses. That other correspondent who heard screams and yells all night after the second battle could not be actually sure that they were caused by fresh pangs. As for the terrible deeds reported from the other side the Balkans, after the retreat of Ghourko's army, there is no good evidence that they were committed by the soldiery. Supposing that they were, if ever atrocities could be extenuated, that was the case. The very air was poisoned with the carcasses of murdered Turks. They lay in festering heaps upon the road itself by which the pursuing columns marched. Violated women and tortured children were there, burnt in the fire of their own homes. The worst crimes of the Indian mutiny were outdone, and the victims were not tens but thousands.

The offence lies with those who begin inhuman deeds. Had the advancing Turks massacred every Bulgar on their road, they would have done no more—seeing the unparalleled measure of atrocities for which vengeance was due—than the most humane of armies have done. What was the treachery of Bazeilles to this, or even the horrors of Cawnpore? What Arab *razzia* in the French colony caused one-thousandth part of the suffering and shame? But it is not certain that the Turkish soldiers requited cruelty for cruelty. Many Bulgars were shot and many hanged, but the tortures, if such there were, may well have been inflicted by the maddened peasantry which returned in the army's wake. By that code of war upon which Russian generals act, any Moslem carrying arms, but wearing no uniform, is a Bashi-Bazouk, and therefore a ravisher of women and a murderer, to be killed like a dog or handed over to the Bulgars for their ghastly sport. He

might be a native of Bolwan, or a survivor from the thousand villages burnt, wandering back at peril of his life to claim Russian protection. He might be a man from whom everything had been reft, his wife and children massacred, his home destroyed, driven to arms by starvation.

The behaviour of the Moslem army, when it began to move, certainly favours the idea that the devastation of the Tunja valley was not the work of soldiers. But negative evidence cannot be set against positive, and if the Turks tortured the wounded once, as beyond question they did, it is probable that they did the same on other occasions. It was insisted by the Grand Duke that there had been no irregulars or Bashi-Bazouks in the army defending the Shipka Pass, and we have no proof to the contrary. But there were negroes there. Amongst the Turks lying dead upon the hill-side two negroes were conspicuous, and there may have been scores. It was insisted also that officers must have seen the heads of the dead every time they looked through the door of their tents, since one at least was lying in the very middle of the slope. But this is no evidence that the officers approved. They had business enough in hand, and it was no time for courts-martial or lessons in humanity. For aught we know to the contrary, indeed, there may have been an inquiry afoot, and the severest measures contemplated to punish these deeds. If the argument from facts be applied severely, it must be put forward, on the other hand, that the mutilated bodies were all hidden, though one of the heads were displayed. For that matter, an advocate might argue that this very object had been brought as evidence by the shocked discoverer, and no one could refute him.

The facts, therefore, must not be made too much of. *Qui trop embrasse, embrasse mal*, is an old proverb. It is enough, and more, to prove that in the Turkish army there are savages as vile as the Bulgar. Russians I do not even suspect of these crimes. They often refuse quarter, as might be looked for in a war of this class ;

but to sever heads and deliberately torture are not, I think, in their disposition, nor does their hate go so far.

There are two objects which may be gained by mutilating the wounded, to put aside the mere impulse of gratifying rage. It may be hoped to frighten the enemy by adding a new terror to battle, and to repress his enterprise. Both of these expectations were fulfilled in the late war. Russian soldiers felt a nameless dread of their foe, which did not quell their courage in attack, but transformed repulse into rout. The man who would not shrink from bullets in advancing is not to be depended on in retreat when he knows that death is not the worst to befall him if he should drop. And the service of reconnoitring suffers gravely. The solitary vedette or the little group of Cossacks trembled at a shadow. Bulgars dreaded a Russian advance, unless it were made in force for a permanent occupation, and they were apt to shield themselves beforehand by giving information of the movement. They believed themselves doomed if the Russians, having once come, should go away again. When General Skobelev occupied Trojan the people all ran to the woods, only sending him a deputation to ask if he meant to remain; praying him, if not, for Heaven's sake to leave.

Mahometans believe in the resurrection of the body, and they think that mutilation has its effect in the next world—some inexplicably disastrous result, if it be practised on a beaten enemy. The same idea seems to rule amongst Kaffirs. We find a like notion prevailing in India, and utilize it in the punishment of mutineers by blowing them from the mouths of guns. The Turk does not understand our idea of chivalrous war. He still holds the simple view that a foe should be frankly forgiven, or killed by any means most disagreeable to him. Not used to fight for an idea, nor capable of comprehending the "delights of battle," as Attila described them in a memorable "order of the day," he thinks every process allowable which tends to discomfort his enemy. In truth, the pact which we have made between Chris-

tianity and war is hopelessly illogical. The order to forgive injuries, to refuse strife, is again and again repeated. Since the whole precept cannot be carried out at present—though all experience tends to make the hopeful think that a better time grows nearer daily—we have fashioned a strange compromise. Turning the spirit of Christianity to bear upon that which is its natural antithesis, we invent humane warfare, and protest as loudly against violation of the precepts thus laid down, as if they were founded, not in opposition to man's nature, but upon its very essence.

But the nature of man, by postulate, is prone to evil, and its utmost brutality is developed in war. How shall those be blamed who have never heard of our revelation if they follow their unguided instinct? The Bulgar is a Christian; he has heard, more or less, and he professes our creed of morals; but the Turk has not. No word can be said in defence of the former, whose acts have been at least as atrocious; but the latter follows the mere rules of human nature, and by them alone can be fairly judged. Fired by the study of Darwin, Lyall, and other "pre-historic" writers, a well-known artist lately sketched a battle-field of the time before record began. It is a picture of hideous truth, and the worst atrocities of the Moslem show, beside that comparison, how human beings have advanced, even those unblessed by Christianity. In their special form, which is not ours, the mutilations of the wounded at Shipka might have shocked an Englishman, a Frenchman, or a Spaniard of two hundred years ago; but the cruelty of these, in their form, which is not that of the Turk, would have shocked a Moslem of to-day. That hero of chivalry himself, Lord Herbert of Cherbury, the knight-errant of ladies' top-knots, as Horace Walpole called him, did not show much regard for humane warfare. His spirited account of the *duello* with Sir John Ayres in Whitehall, "opposite Scotland-yard"—a sufficiently strange place for fighting—is not nice to read. At that very time, if we remember dates rather hard to verify, "Michel

the Brave" was impaling a whole Turkish army, and the pacha, in turn, was lining the Danube with impaled Roumanians. We have learned to shudder at deeds which Lord Herbert of Cherbury thought glorious, and a pacha's hair would stand on end at the idea of acting as did his predecessors. Turkish mutilations, Russian barbarity, are very shocking; but the moral of them is not without its comfort. *E pur se muove.* The world goes on and humanity progresses.

Perhaps the worst of campaigning is that habits learned therein so cling to a man. The Crimean war is twenty years old, but an officer of rank said lately that he had not recovered, nor expects to do so, from its influence upon his youth. A man learns some good, but he unlearns more, in camp. He gets to know himself, which is no slight benefit, but he gets to know more than is needful of the worse side of human nature. He is apt to grow indifferent to the small matters which make up the existence of stay-at-home people, his temper becomes impatient, and the fine edge of his character wears off all round. Put thus in broad terms, people may hastily argue that the mischief is small, and the benefit considerable. But our ancestors knew better than we, since they had more experience, in an age more frank, what is the teaching of camps. It tends to destroy that notion which is the deepest safeguard of order. If "old soldiers" are as quiet and peaceable as other citizens, it is not the less true that their instinctive reverence for human life has been more or less sapped;—I speak, of course, of those who have seen real fighting, real war. I was standing lately beside a general, whose many decorations showed long and active service. A grey-haired soldier came by in undress, who saluted the brigadier with that respectful familiarity which shows long acquaintance in the field. "A noble fellow that!" said the general to me. "He has the Crimean, Mutiny, and Chinese medals, with I don't know how many clasps, and now he has earned another in Afghanistan. It is strange to think," he added more thoughtfully, "how that

gallant, honourable soldier would run his bayonet through any of those people yonder (in the camp bazaar) at a word from his officer, and how conscience would never give him a pang for the deed."

TRIED BY THE FETISH.

THE most ridiculous specimen of mankind known to me is the educated negro. In parts of the world which I have not yet visited—the United States, for instance—there may probably be samples of a different sort. The experience upon which I base my observation is confined to the West Indies, the Spanish Main, the West Coast of Africa, and Cape Colony. This is wide enough to give a rule, yet not so wide as to deny exceptions. I am not at all prepared to say what manner of education would civilize the negro, whilst leaving intact his manhood and his native virtues, such as they are. Some startling incidents of the late Kaffir War incline Cape colonists to think that the attempt is hopeless any way. Edmund Sandilli was a show-pupil, a graduate, a deputy-magistrate, and so on. He had the honour to lunch with Sir Bartle Frere, in company with other officials and magnates of the neighbourhood, when his excellency visited the Eastern Province. He attended the public ball, in white tie and “claw-hammer;” but two days afterwards he fled to the bush, and in due time was killed, wearing the martial costume of a blanket and a daub of clay. Dukwana’s case, again, is hard upon negrophiles. A rich man, a preacher, a champion of Sunday-schools, he also took to the bush, the blanket, and the paint, ending like the young warrior Edmund. Other instances are somewhat anxiously discussed in South Africa. One moral only I draw in the story you are going to read : that the savage is not necessarily civilized by

schooling. Our knowledge, according to my experience, makes him ridiculous to white men, and offensive to black; too often it is used in furthering schemes vicious or criminal. Persons are naturally apt to think that a negro absurdly dressed, with the manners of a monkey, the courage of an old woman, and the language of a parrot, does not carry ill-will beyond silly spite. To this grave error many sad occurrences are due.

My friend May is a trader on the Gold Coast. He succeeded, as agent of the legatees, to a business so old and so important that on the winding up of the former partnership, debts to over a million sterling were found due. This shows that the uncultured negro has a pretty shrewd comprehension of fraudulent trading.

"What will you take in cash," I asked one day, "for that library of paper?"

"I have no instructions," May replied; "but if you offer me sound bills for twenty thousand pounds, upon my own responsibility I'll transfer every debt."

Several negro and half-caste clerks were employed in the business. They came mostly from Sierra Leone, but the head of them was son to a Fantee chief in the town. All spoke that fantastical dialect which passes for English on the Gold Coast, and all had received more or less instruction of a general sort. Yessa, the head clerk, was a typical representation of the school-negro. His dress, his manners, language, thoughts, and habits, were grotesque. Colonel Brackenbury set out upon his travels in Bulgaria with a love for that dirty population almost hysterical; but after a month's experience of the educated Bulgar, he confessed, through the *Times*, a longing to kick every one he met. So we longed to kick Yessa, in a contemptuous sort of way. He had some ability, no doubt, and he knew his work. The influence of his father had been several times useful to May. That gentleman himself had lost a good deal of his niceness in a lifetime on the coast, and Yessa was a favourite with him. The two English

clerks, or assistants, were also content to associate with a creature who could at least make himself understood, who could drink brandy-and-soda, smoke cheroots, and sing a song unutterably nonsensical.

One of these clerks had but lately arrived from England, replacing a youth who died. Of course, I scarcely expect to be believed in stating that the average longevity of May's clerks on the coast was, and is, I suppose, under four years. A majority die after less than eighteen months' service, but these cases are balanced by a very few so constituted that they endure the climate. Such men are as valuable as is a "salted" horse upon the Kaffir frontier; and at the end of their engagement with the trader they "set up for themselves," or receive high pay as managers of the inland stations. I will call this young fellow Baker.

There was, and is, I hope, a family in the town named Rudger, consisting of a widow and three daughters. Mrs. Rudger was a half-breed; her late husband white. He had been a merchant, and had gathered property sufficient to leave his widow comfortable. The two elder girls went to school at Capetown, but Rudger's death had deprived the youngest of this advantage. A pretty creature she was, rather dark for a quadroon, but singularly graceful. Her velvet eyes had a shy defiance that provoked one to teasing; her full, crimson mouth invited kisses. I fear the invitation was lost, for neither of May's clerks were marrying men, and another bachelor did not exist within many miles. Her sisters were fast withering. I do not believe the girl gave a thought to the future. Brought up amongst slaves, in a languid climate, by a careless father, and a mother who was herself more negress than European, Mary was a little savage.

When her sisters returned from school, very prim and proper, they found the child airily dressed in a short petticoat and a necklace. Very hard they tried to civilize her, but quite uselessly. The gulf could never be filled up. If not so shy and suspicious with them as with other people more or less white, she was quite

as jealous of superiority. With the rod in one hand, and the book in the other, they forced her to learn her letters, and to write in a way. But it was too late to expel the savage by such means. When Mary grew old enough and strong enough to defend herself, her doings made endless gossip for the little colony. It was perfectly well known that a visitor entering suddenly might find the youngest Miss Rudger, in native dress and ornaments, racing in the courtyard, or playing games, or dancing with her mother's slaves and some chosen playmates. For several years she would not willingly see a white face, but by the time I knew her the girl had been persuaded to pay calls, and take tea, and otherwise participate in the dreary gaieties of the place. But dismay and anger showed themselves without concealment if one spoke to her, and Mrs. May told me, with distressed humour, that she would begin unfastening her dress twenty yards from home, to throw it off the instant when the doors were shut. Under her clothes she always wore the native petticoat, and that was her only costume nine hours in ten of the working day.

Mary Rudger has not much to do with my tale, but a character which amused and rather interested me at the time may be worth a few lines of description. I trust the reader believes when I say that she is no fictitious personage.

Leading such a life, it is not strange that Baker did not see the girl for several weeks after his arrival. A shrewd, pleasant young fellow was the clerk; he died a few months after. When at length the introduction was made, Baker found this little savage hugely droll. Heedless of flashing eyes and quivering lips, he took every opportunity to draw her out. Were I composing a love-story, this would be an excellent opportunity to trace the gradual change from proud dislike to love, from angry self-consciousness to maiden modesty, from all sorts of ugly passions to a gentle virtue. I am sorry to throw away the chance. But in very truth Miss Rudger grew to hate the man as furiously as a girl not badly disposed can possibly hate. She would not

have killed him, perhaps, unless with a sudden stab, in hot blood, but I believe she would have danced one of her negro dances on hearing of his death. But nothing of the sort happened. Mary did not know the science of pin-pricking by which ladies avenge themselves. Sharp things she could say in Fantee, no doubt ; but her English, very sweet and tolerably correct, could not carry her into repartee. Besides, she was a savage, and felt the savage diffidence. Baker was not rude—was much too good a fellow for that ; but he had as great a gift of “chaff” as a gentleman can have, a ready wit, and excellent nerve. Had Mary been more civilized, she would have stayed at home, avoiding chances to meet him. But her pride forbade that. And so the servants, who did not understand what was said, put it about the town that Baker was going to make a match with the youngest Miss Rudger. And thus very different events came to happen.

Yessa grew jealous. He was in love with the girl as deeply as his frivolous affections could go. Though the elder sisters recognized him with grave distance, and invited him only to promiscuous entertainments, Mary had no such pride. His own sister had been her favourite playmate, and in childhood the little quadron, by courtesy white, paid constant visits to the rickety old barrack where dwelt Yessa's father. But, beyond his love, the negro had, I imagine, a further cause for irritation. Amongst all his class there is a strange jealousy of race and colour. The “educated” black seems to feel it intolerable that a white man should have dealings with any woman who has black blood in her veins. The one-sided character of miscegenation is an abiding subject of anger with him. He cannot get a white wife, scarcely a coloured one ; whilst the white man picks and chooses even a mistress among his people. Yet he is every inch as fine a fellow as the white—nay, much finer. Hence, as I understand it, rage ! Under these passions Yessa worked himself to the point of crime.

One morning, when my friend entered his counting-house, he

found the cash-box missing. It had been deposited over-night in the usual place, with some three or four hundred pounds locked in it, dollars and gold-dust. Careful examination showed no trace of violence outside ; the thief had evidently unlocked the door, and done his work methodically. Under these circumstances suspicion pointed to the sweeper, who came into the house each morning before dawn, took the key from its place, and made the room ready for his master. The dogs knew him ; so, of course, did the servants, who sleep all about the stairs. It was just possible, but most unlikely, that one of these latter had committed the theft ; however, May sent for the police, and gave his sweeper into custody. A very low type of man this fellow was—not brutal, but hydrocephalus, slow, ill-matched in his limbs. He had been in the firm's service many years, and up to this moment his honesty and his devotion had never been suspected.

It may be imagined that Fantee detectives are not the most skilful of their class. After several remands, no evidence could be found against Koffee Quantiah, and he was discharged. British ingenuity having thus failed, native science was called in, as usual. Yessa proposed that the man should be delivered to his father, and it was done. The English magistrate knew quite well that the accused only left his court to be conveyed by his police to an illegal jurisdiction ; but he had been long enough upon the coast to learn his own impotence, and the impotence of British law, in dealing with such cases. The negro has actually nothing to lose ; if sentenced to gaol, he is more comfortable than outside ; "hard labour" proves easy enough any way, and those who superintend him, lazy as himself, will not trouble to see the light task carried out. He must be very dull and friendless to be convicted, and at the worst he has nothing to fear. In very different frame of mind he regards a trial by fetish. The mystery of it stirs his wool, makes his flesh creep at a threat. Instead of the open, sunny court, where cunning and perjury

have a fair field, his trial will be held in darkness and silence, beings unearthly will accuse him, and the terrors of hell gape on him living. They say upon the coast that a trial by fetish never fails to discover crime, though often enough it ends in the accusation of the innocent. For the secret tribunal may keep to itself the truth, and compel the prisoner to denounce an enemy of its own.

Gentlemen of experience have told me their conviction that in such cases the guilty man really believes his own false charge—is brought so entirely under the influence of the fetish that he honestly fathers his own deed upon somebody else. It may possibly be so. I myself have observed such things as forbid me to be incredulous rashly. But there is another serious disadvantage in appealing to this tribunal, effective though it be. As it may serve its own malevolent interests by accusing the guiltless, so it will assuredly take toll of the plunder, when the case is one of theft. Circumstances decide how much of the stolen property shall be restored after discovery. A popular and influential trader like May might expect to be let off with an easy percentage, but few other persons of the town could have hoped to recover one half of their loss though the criminal's guilt were proven.

Were I inventing a story, I think I could devise a very awful scene at this point. Imagination has free play in dealing with the fetish mysteries. We only know of them that they drive men to madness and death through fright; but whether the machinery is substantial or purely moral; objective, as by goblins and such like; or subjective, as by mesmerism and stimulated fancy, no one has revealed. It is a curious fact that the secrets of this prison-house are never told, though inquisitive white men constantly inquire. From the meagre hints which I assiduously gathered, it seems likely that the victim's mind is unhinged by potions which so excite the nerves that little or no legerdemain calls up the most horrible pictures. No torture is practised

evidently, for in a week at most the prisoner is restored to view, changed, indeed, but not disfigured or scarred. The negroes of the West Coast possess many secrets of herbal-chemistry, some beneficent, some noxious. They can cure dysentery and fever, or so, at least, white settlers believe, as I shall presently show. But their chief study, of course, is poison of various kinds; aphrodisiac, stimulating, stupefying, lethal.

Whatever the process employed, it succeeded, as usual, upon Koffee Quantiah. Yessa came first to tell where the cash-box would be found, and it was duly recovered, but empty. Two days later, he brought word of the contents, and again the report proved true. May regained his money reduced some twenty-five per cent.; a deficit which he did not closely scrutinize. Next morning, the old chief, Yessa's father, came with a certain air. He begged to speak with May alone, and informed him, with much concern, that Koffee Quantiah incriminated Baker. A very circumstantial tale he had, but May cut it short. "You've recovered my money very cleverly, chief," he said; "don't spoil the credit of your fetish by talking nonsense." The old villain tried to protest, but May knew him and his kind. "Mind this, chief," he said seriously: "your fetish evidently dislikes Baker. If any harm comes to him, I shall look towards you; so take care." With oaths the Fantee declared he had spoken the mere truth, and went down the steps, stumbling with passion.

All was not over, as May supposed. Koffee Quantiah, released, attended the magistrate's court, declared his own guilt, and alleged that Baker had incited him. A warrant was issued, of course, and although nobody believed the charge, there was great gossip and scandal, as will be believed. May gave bail for his clerk upon the instant, and when the case came on it was dismissed forthwith. Koffee Quantiah vowed he had spoken the truth, but he found himself charged with perjury as well as theft, for the statements made were ridiculous. Now arose a further complication; for the fetish trial could not be altogether ignored in this

inquiry, and although the magistrate wished to pass over it as lightly as possible, the chain of circumstances proved obliged him to commit Yessa as an accomplice after the fact. This was disagreeable for May, for himself, and for everybody, since the fetish court, as a last resource, is mighty convenient. People began to ask in alarm whither this investigation was likely to lead.

The trial of the prisoners could not take place immediately, since the magistrate had to visit an outlying station. Before his return, in a week or ten days of healthy diet and regular exercise, Koffee Quantiah began to change. He had issued from the dark realm of the fetish very pale, thin, and scared, with nerves so shaken that a sound made him tremble. But a phlegmatic temperament fast recovers its tone, and after awhile the prisoner seemed to wake. First one and then another piece of his evidence he contradicted, beginning with explanations and ending with confession of perjury. His words were duly taken down, and when Baker had been quite exonerated the question was put: Who told you to accuse him? Koffee was not yet prepared to answer. He trembled and held his tongue, developed a high fever in the night, and died delirious in forty-eight hours.

An unsatisfactory ending to the case for disinterested on-lookers, but welcomed with great relief by the inhabitants of the town. No one doubted that the prisoner had been poisoned, but these mysteries are much better ignored. A few days afterwards Yessa was discharged without fuss. He walked from the court to May's office, put on his working coat, and seated himself as though nothing had happened. The English clerks were both employed elsewhere for the moment; the natives regarded this favourite of Obi with an awe beyond words to tell. So May first learned his insolent return when he came up the steps with some question of accounts. Resisting an impulse to throw the scoundrel headlong down, he paid his wages, and saw him off the premises. Sincerely astonished was Yessa at this treatment. His father

came down and gravely begged an explanation ; his mother and sisters blockaded the store, throwing themselves prostrate before any white man who entered or left. All the chief's retainers "picketed," the street, relieving each other, and imploring justice. May sent for the police, but they could do no more than keep the thoroughfare open. Again it was necessary to appeal from English law to the silent machinery of native life. There were chiefs more powerful than Yessa's father, and with one of these, or at least with his female kind, Baker had made himself a favourite by good-tempered and liberal dealings. He readily interfered to stop the persecution, and after three days' siege Mrs. May was once more able to go abroad.

But though Yessa acquiesced perforce in his dismissal, the vengeance of the fetish was all the more likely to overtake the enemy who had caused it. Baker's friends advised him to be always on his guard, to eat and drink nowhere but at home, to enter no boat, to take no walks—in short, they recommended him a life which the young fellow could not endure. He paid a visit to the chief mentioned, and procured his active assistance, partly for love, partly for cash down. How the matter was worked, we have, as usual, no hint, but Yessa sailed for Sierra Leone by the next vessel, and Baker was authoritatively assured that he had no more cause for alarm. So ended the tale thus far, and I regret that the next incident is not a marriage but a funeral. The young clerk died whilst I was up the country, of a death but too "natural" on that coast—bilious fever. It was sad to hear the common story.

He took the disease, and lost courage at once, walking and sitting at table, whilst the tears rolled down his cheeks. From time to time the consciousness of doom overwhelmed him, and he wept in passionate despair. It is terrible to see a strong man consorting thus with the living, whilst death is busy in his frame. Upon the third day Baker was forced to lie down, the delirium, and then the fatal coma, seized him, and he died before morning.

Such is the end, earlier or later, of nine in ten who seek fortune on that coast, but this poor boy's case had one peculiarity. A favourite, as I have said, with influential people of the town, they sent a deputation, begging May "to let them cure him." May refused. They sent again when delirium set in, praying more earnestly than before. "You know," said the women, "that your doctor gives a man up when once he begins to rave. Baker is doomed by the science of the whites. Give him to us, then, since *you* are sure we can do no harm, and *we* are sure we can heal him." May again refused, and the boy died.

"Of course," I said, when he told me the story, with great emotion, "of course, you felt certain that the women would do no good?"

"No," he answered, "and that is my pain. I think it likely, even most likely, that they would have brought him through. But if they failed? How could I tell Baker's father that I had trusted his son to the hands of savages? What would he have felt! The old man would have called me murderer, and every one in England would have cried out at me! It was a terrible dilemma! I took advice of all the people here. Heaven only knows whether I acted best for the poor fellow who is dead, but the living will justify me!"

The reader must decide that for himself.

BALLAD POETRY OF ROUMANIA.

A FOREIGNER resident in Bucharest, lately suggested that the national tongue should be banished from Roumanian schools. Very indignant were certain patriots at this proposal, but the originator of it did not lack such cogent arguments as are used against the study of Gaelic, Erse, or Cymric by persons unburdened with sentiment. Where, he said, are the Roumanian books that children can read as they grow up, the treatises scientific and mathematic, the histories, works of philosophy, even the printed tales and poems? For modern purposes and modern life a knowledge of Roumanian is scarcely more useful than a knowledge of Sanscrit.

If a boyard would know more than his servants, who cannot read at all, he must learn French or German, or English. One of these is his familiar language at home, in the shops, in society, and at court. His children, not unfrequently, cannot speak their native tongue. The revolution suggested, therefore, has been already carried out by the wealthy and cultured. Why should not Government follow this example, and by a bold step abolish a language which has no literature and no records, which is practically disused by the upper class?

The argument is logically sound, and what may be set against it is stigmatized as sentimental declamation. So entirely true is the assertion of French supremacy, that few who rebel against it would think of supporting their case by putting forward the most

exquisite ballad poetry of Europe, saving our own. It is no new thing amongst this extraordinary people to abandon their own tongue and adopt some other—we refer, of course, to the leaders of fashion. When the Pope tried to reunite them to his Church, five hundred years ago, they resisted the attempt not with arms alone. A sweeping edict proscribed Roman characters, substituting for them the “Cyrillian,” or Slavo-Greek, which is still seen in mass books. At the same time, in court circles, they professed to speak Slavonic—which dialect is uncertain; but the Wallach’s instinctive dislike towards his hereditary foe cut this fancy short, and fashion took refuge in Greek. The despotism of the hated Fanariots presently cured that mania, and upon their expulsion Rouman was the “only wear,” until French once more superseded it.

It is no wonder, therefore, that the language wants a literature. But whilst these changes and mad fancies—so characteristic of the race—were running their career, the peasants, unaffected by them, were composing songs of war and love in their own beautiful speech. It has been said that ballad poetry will not bear translation, least of all, one would think, translation into French. But things Rouman, like things Spanish, are not to be judged by ordinary maxims. So full of life and action are these songs, their sentiment is so clear, concise, abrupt sometimes, that though they lose their music, and often, doubtless, a felicity of expression which the nation feels, the skeleton affects one strangely.

All ballad poetry is “objective.” The peasant-poet hears or sees or imagines an event, and throws it upon his anvil, red hot. He does not begin by searching for his ore, troubles not about its smelting, much more about the destiny of his work when he has done with it. But if this be a characteristic of all ballad-makers, it distinguishes the Roumanian among them all. That immortal though forgotten genius who sang the woful hunting at Chevy Chase tells at least how it came about and how it ended; his Wallach rival, to complete the instance, would have been likely to begin with—

“Quoth he, ‘Earl Douglas promised me
This day to meet me here,’ &c.

and to finish abruptly with the deaths of Percy and Douglas, leaving all the rest to fight it out unchronicled. This sudden stop might lead one to fancy that the ending stanzas had been lost, were it not so often emphasized by a pithy interjection, as in the *Geste of Dolka*, “The traitor’s heart is poison!” or in that of *Novak and the Cadi’s daughter*, “Young men make quarrels, and old men appease them!”

The imagery of the Roumanian poet, as might be expected, is more florid than that of his northern rival. For him the pagan mythology still lives. Pan haunts the forests, nymphs dwell in the waters, unknown powers of mischief must be soothed by a libation, dragons of various sizes take an active part in affairs, and heroes go about subduing them. But he has fortunately lost all that recollection of classic fable which might ruin his work by tempting him to exact allusion. Pan and the rest are familiar, but as wolves or wizards are familiar—dangers to be borne in mind and dreaded, not to be particularly described. It has been observed that poets of culture generally incline to give the evil force the mastery, when it comes to a contest with the good, and so it happens with our ballad-master. In the fine song of “*Paunasul Codrilor*,” Pan of the Woods, the young warrior is shown walking with his maiden. He says and says again, “Sing me thy song which is dear as my own soul!”

“Friend, I would sing it from my heart, but the forests would re-echo my voice, and suddenly we should see the Pan, the bravest of the brave!”

“Dearest, my loved one with the golden hair, have no terror nor trouble! Whilst thou art near me, fear nothing for thyself! Whilst I am near thee, fear nothing for me!”

The young girl begins to sing, the forests re-echo, and suddenly appears the Pan, the bravest of the brave. He demands the girl,

and they fight. The maid watches them, and her eyes sparkle, her heart bounds.

"Oh, my love, my darling, refasten my belt! See, my strength fails, and I lose my treasure" (my life)!

"No, no, friend, I will do nothing! For the struggle is fair, and him who wins I will take for my lover!" The fight recommences, and one of them is victor. "Which of the two goes away with the maiden? It is the Pan of the forest, the bravest of the brave. Which has fallen in the strife, and lies alone, abandoned? It is the young warrior. He dies in the solitude of the woods." The moral is here that of our "Twa Corbies."

We have also an example of that imagery of convention which characterizes every school of ballad-maker. In our English poems of the sort, as Lord Macaulay indicates, all the gold is red, all the ladies are gay, a porter is proud *ex officio*, and a hawk, when he or she has one, is always the lover's confidant. The conventional imagery of the Rouman is more refined. To "lose one's treasure" is to die; Death is "the bride of the world," since every one is destined for it at birth. So a great chief is described as one who "bears a star upon his forehead," a beautiful woman is always golden-haired, and often "a bit of the sun," a hero's waist is invariably so slender as to "pass through a ring," a man in headlong rage "plays Danube," *se face Dunere*.

In the collection of masterpieces which M. Basile Alexandri has rescued from oblivion it is difficult to choose one more beautiful than another. I transcribe, as an example of the "ballad of action," that called "Toma Alimoche," not because it is the best, but because it is the best of the shortest. Thus runs the legend:—

"Far off, brother, far off but not too far, there above, on the plateau of the Dniester, in the Turk's land, on the horizon of those hills, in the valley of the Five Elms which spring from one trunk—like brothers from one mother—there sat Toma Alimoche, a boyard of Lower Moldavia. Beside him his faithful horse, tied

to a silver staple, cropped the thick grass ; whilst seated in the shade, before a banquet, he rejoiced and was merry, and cried in feasting,—

“ ‘I would drink to some one, and know not whom. Shall I drink to my horse? But he is wild, fit only to gallop. Shall I drink to my arms? my arms, my dear sisters? But they are nothing besides dry wood, dry wood and cold iron!’ ”

“ ‘Lo ! he hears a distant neighing which comes nearer and nearer. Toma rises lazily, looks over the plain, and sees a young warrior, on a horse black and swift, a horse of the Dobrudscha, worth a monarch’s steed. This warrior, tall and bearded, like a dense-leaved oak—it was Mané the broad-shouldered ! He wore a sheepskin large and silky, and a rude club shaped with the axe. He approached Toma and spoke—‘Holà, Toma Alimoche, Bayard of Lower Moldavia, what do you galloping over our lands, ruining fields and meadows?’ ”

“ ‘The Bayard Toma Alimoche offers him a cup of red wine— ‘Joy and health to thee, Mané the Bastard. Why put thyself in a rage? Come and drink with me rather.’ ”

“ ‘Mané takes the cup with his left hand, with the other he grasps his club, and whirls it so skilfully, heaves it with such strength, that he wounds Toma below the breasts, a great gash at his waist, where hang his heavy arms. Toma feels an icy shiver, but snatches his double-bladed sword with both hands ; Mané grips the saddle, turns his back and flies. ‘Holà, hé ! base bastard ! Thou hast killed me ! But if thou fall into my grip, thy life will be yet shorter !’ And whilst he shouted thus he held the gaping wound with both hands, buckled his girdle over it, and drew near his horse. ‘Ah, my little horse,’ cried he, ‘why canst thou not do, my brave darling, now in thine old age, what thou didst when young !’ ”

“ ‘Take my mane, spring on my back, master, and hold firm. My old age shall let you see what in my youth I could do !’ Then swiftly Toma leapt into the saddle, and bounded in pursuit

of Mané, crying ever and always, 'Holà, hé, my little horse; holà, my brave darling! Stretch thyself out along the road, bend thyself like the tall grass at the blast of the north wind!'

"The horse flew on until Toma caught sight of Mané and cried to him from afar: 'Thou hast struck me like a villain, thou hast fled like a coward! But if thou fall into my hands, short shall be thy shrift, credit me!'"

"Mané trembles and turns aside, but Toma overtakes him, and strikes him such a blow that with one slash he divides his body and three ribs of his black horse. The carcass falls to earth on either side, whilst Toma thus speaks to his horse. 'Holà, hé, my little horse, holà, my brave darling, my eyes begin to veil with spider's webs, clouds revolve above my head. Fly quick, quick as a thought, and carry me to the horizon of those hills, to the valley of the Five Elms, for I die. Henceforward, so long as thou livest, I shall mount thee never again, my brave! But when I am dead, when I caress thee no more, turn thy hoof into a spade to dig me a grave under the trees. Then take my body with thy teeth, and place it in the tomb. The elms will bend above me, they will shake over me their plumes of boughs, and their leaves will cover my body.'"

This legend dates apparently from the sixteenth century. As it tells the legend, Toma seems to have been a trespasser, or worse, and Mané to have been a wronged landowner. Who was either of the heroes the poet does not inform us, perhaps because everybody knew all about them when he was writing. But the sympathies of the people, in all countries and ages, have been with the lawless. This is especially the case with Rouman ballads. The outlaw and the brigand are their favourite personages. They kill Turks and Tartars by the score, carry off their wives and daughters, insult the Kadi whilst they die in torment; but give to the Christian poor, avenge their wrongs, and are steadfast in the faith. Codréan is the Robin Hood of Wallachia, and his *gestes* are many. In the long ages of Fanariot oppression,

a passage of his best-known legend was adapted to the feelings of the time. Beside the judgment-seat of the Hospodar, Codréan sees a Greek, and exclaims, "Highness, hear not the Greeks, for they will eat thy brain. The Greek is a reptile full of venom; the Greek is poison to the touch, and cankers the inmost bone!" The effect of these lines is undying, and the politics of Europe may some day be influenced by an unknown bard of centuries ago.

Remarks upon Roumanian ballad poetry, however short, would be incomplete without allusion to the love-songs of the people. I take one at random, which describes the wooing of the turtle dove by the cuckoo:—

"'Dear dove, sweet birdie, be my mistress till Sunday.'

"'For yourself I do not say nay, but I say nay because of your mother, who is an evil witch; she would never cease upbraiding me for loving you too much—too much fondling you.'"

The cuckoo insists, always offering love "until Sunday," and the turtle declares she will become a "little white loaf, moistened with tears, and will hide in the ashes of the hearth," rather than consent.¹

"'Whatever you do, whatever you become, I will not let you live in peace, for I will change into a shovel, and though I burn in the fire I will find you and protect you from the heat; then I will cool you with my breath and cover you with kisses; so that you shall be able no longer to defend yourself, dear turtle dove.'"

The dove declares she will become a reed and hide in a marsh; but the cuckoo will follow as a shepherd, and he will find the most beautiful reed in the marsh, will cut it for a flute, and

¹ At the village dance on Sunday evenings peasant boys and girls make acquaintance. The cuckoo is charmingly frank; he will not engage himself beyond the next *réunion*. This may be the poet's satire upon his countrymen's inconstancy, but I think not. If it be so intended, the lesson is quite thrown away, for every Wallach would gravely declare that the cuckoo behaved in a very delicate and sensible manner, showing at once a knowledge of real life, and a chivalrous desire to prevent any misconception.

keep it ever at his lips. The dove shows signs of weakness, admitting how sweet it would be to live with the grey cuckoo. But his mother is so wicked, that after all she prefers to change herself into a little holy image, and hide in the deepest nook of the church.

“‘Whatever you do, whatever you become,’ answers the cuckoo, ‘I will not let you rest, for in my turn I will transform myself into a chorister, or a deacon, and I will be so devout, so devout, that I will visit the church every day, from Monday to Sunday, to kneel before the holy images and to kiss thee. So you shall not resist, but be my mistress, dear turtle dove.’” And so the song ends. The last allusion refers to a custom of extra-pious people in the Greek Church, who kiss every picture round the walls.

I must not dip further into the delightful volumes in which M. Basile Alexandri has collected the folk-lore of his country. To him is due the credit of actually discovering these beautiful things, which were unknown to the fashionables of Bucharest. By rank, wealth, and character, his position is such as gives him a powerful voice in affairs, but amongst many services done his country, none is so great as the rescue of its ballads. M. Alexandri, I believe, has twice been entrusted with a mission to England. Not to him would the boldest utilitarian dare propose to abolish the Rouman tongue, and all who love real poetry—and who does not—would regret the language which contains gems elsewhere scarcely equalled. And yet, and yet, may I let it be known without offence, that M. Alexandri's only daughter could not speak a word of Roumanian until eighteen years old, and now cannot talk in it; that the “first bridesmaid” at this young lady's wedding knew but a few unconnected words; whilst the poet's charming nieces cannot absolutely say more than “yes” and “no” in their mother-tongue.

A GAME OF BRAG.

WHEN I see in the street a certain great nobleman, very active, very thorough, and, above all, very manly, it is no more and no less than natural that I should think how Singapore laughed at him fifteen years ago. He would smile a little and colour a good deal, I should say, to remember what cause of merriment he gave, but at that time he was much too high in air to catch the remarks of a trading community. A friend who has "cast his lines" in Colorado, and finds it a pleasant place, lately asked me, with indignation, whether the story I have on my pen can possibly be true. He says that a wealthy neighbour boasts himself the hero of it. I don't see, for my own part, that there is anything to be proud of; but poor human beings will find glory in unpromising nooks and corners. As for the tale, it is quite correct, and one could not grudge an enemy his triumph in it.

I will call our English peer Lord Archer, if you please. With half-a-dozen friends he arrived at Singapore on his journey round the world. Whilst there he undertook an expedition against the elephants on the Johore river. Some legends might be told of that cruise, for his lordship was a man to whom nothing happened as it happens to other people. Returning from the Johore he laid his yacht opposite the timber-yards of the Tumangong, a great potentate over yonder. One day, after lunching with the chief, he got into the dingy to go on board. A tall, lanky,

ragged fellow came up, and asked to speak with the captain. Archer took him into the dingy.

To the captain this ragged rascal described himself as a gentleman of San Francisco, who had visited the East in search of fortune. Not finding it anywhere so far as he had "prospected," he felt satisfied the East was a swindle, and wished to work his passage towards home, though frankly owning that his experience had not yet been turned to navigation. The man was given a berth, and he set about making himself useful. His utility resolved itself into mixing drinks and telling stories, wherein he was a master, as we knew by experience at Singapore.

If there be any gift on which his lordship prides himself, it is his shooting. Even now you can get "a rise" out of him by this bait, and fifteen years ago it was a craze. So far as he had yet travelled on his way round the globe, nobody had been met who could smash a bottle with ease and grace as he could, until this wandering Yankee came on board. Without the least regard for his lordship's ancient family, or his own subordinate condition, he demolished the bottles faster than they were emptied. It made no difference whether they floated astern, bobbing in the waves, or swung from the yardarm, or were pitched into the air. Bottle aimed at was bottle gone, and Lord Archer grew mad.

One day, when the Yankee had beaten him again, he said, "You're very clever, my good fellow. Do you think you could shoot as straight if another man was looking at you through his pistol?"

"Perhaps so, and perhaps not," said the Yankee, who was always prudent in giving the title, but had his own way of doing so. "Did the lord ever hear of a butt and barking match?"

"Never, sir!"

"Perhaps the lord has heard of barking a squirrel?"

"I've done it myself a hundred times."—"Barking a squirrel" is the ordinary practice of hunters who wish to save the animal's

skin. A charge of shot fired into the bark of the tree above or below a squirrel causes it to tumble headlong by the vibration.

"Where I come from we sometimes try human natur' that way at a friendly meeting."

"How do you mean?"

"One gentleman plays squir'l, and the other has for to bark him. If he draws blood, o' course he spoils the fur, and he loses. As the lord puts a kinder challenge to me, I'll take first butt." He calmly stripped off his coat, then his shirt, and sat down under the bulwarks behind the wheel. "Now," says he, "I'm ready."

"Go to your duties, man, and don't let us have any more of such tomfoolery."

"As the lord pleases, any time will do."

Two or three days passed, and the yacht returned to Singapore Roads. The governor had gone to Pulo Penang. The commandant was a "vulgarian," as Lord Archer thought in those days, and the townspeople did not exactly rain invitations, as will be understood. One very hot morning, as the yachtsmen lounged about their hotel, his lordship offered a hundred pounds for just a suggestion of something to do. The Yankee present observed, "I'll job that, if the lord's serious."

"Why, what can you propose?"

"Just the butt and barking match, that the lord challenged me to awhile ago."

"I made no challenge. Be so good as to cease these hints."

"The lord made an observation, if I might put it so, as threw doubts on my shootin' and my narve—"

"I did nothing of the sort. Don't let me hear any more of it."

"Oh, certainly. Any time will do."

"If you're going to continue this sort of nonsense," said Archer angrily, for they were all laughing round, "you had better leave my service, and find your butts elsewhere."

To this the Yankee made no reply at all ; but, when he withdrew, Archer's friends were unanimous in declaring it a shame to dismiss the man. Nothing more passed until the yacht reached Bruni. There it seemed quite impossible to discharge a white man, and this fact encouraged the Yankee to make a dead set at his lordship. He hinted so ingeniously and so persistently, and Archer's friends laughed so much, that his lordship, in a rage, told him to prepare. Again the fellow stripped, and sat down by the bulwarks.

"Now," said Lord Archer, "what the devil am I to do?"

"Blaze away, as near as you dare shoot. If the lord draws blood, or if I start, he's lost, unless I do ditto."

"What, am I to let you shoot at me?"

"Why, certainly!"

"Oh, enough of this folly. I apologize for what I said, and here's ten dollars for you."

The Yankee took his ten dollars, put his coat on, and said gravely,—

"Will the lord butt now, or wait till after lunch? I don't deny as the work's per'lous, and maybe you'd feel heartier after feedin'."

"Now, I've had quite enough of this, my good fellow. If I hurt your feelings, I've apologized, and I've paid. So have done. I like your cocktails better than your conversation. Mix me one."

The cocktail was brought respectfully. Whilst his lordship sipped it through a straw, the Yankee, standing before him, held forth,—

"The lord sees it's a kinder thing as needs narve, is butting. The bark ain't considerable. It's the butt as gives that deep satisfaction to poor human bein's. When a man's butting is right he feels contempt for the futur'—he does so! And for why? For that he knows his body is scrap-iron, cold-worked, an' his heart is copper-bolted with no waste nor escape; an' his narves

are Swedish steel, superior to sample. Them facts he do know, gentlemen, an' they're a satisfaction to him, whether he stakes his pile in this world or the next. So I would not disappoint the lord if you'd like to butt."

"Damn you, sir, I don't like to butt. Tell them to lower a boat, and tell Captain Macnab I wish to see him in my cabin."

His lordship went below.

The Yankee was not at all alarmed, apparently. He stood with us on deck, telling odd stories, until the captain approaching, ordered him briefly to prepare for leaving the vessel. He only said, "This ain't what I'd expected from the lord. An' it ain't sportsman-like, that's what I say." So everybody thought, but his lordship proved unbending. Bruni enjoyed at that time the advantage of an American consul; and, as for wages, Archer would have paid five hundred pounds rather than sail with such an impudent vagabond. So our Yankee went over the side with an air mingled of respect and resignation. The captain handed him to his consul, gave him a liberal tale of dollars, and returned alone.

The Sultan of Bruni showed as much politeness to his aristocratic visitor as that extremely barbarous potentate knows. A Malay cannot understand nobility other than that of the blood royal. They called Archer "Pangeran," and gave him a salute of one hundred guns. He passed as brother of the Queen, and to have contradicted this idea would only have caused suspicion and general awkwardness. Besides, if truth be told, Archer liked it; liked it as those only can understand—not being Malays—who have observed that the fetishism of aristocracy has no such hot believers as the aristocrats themselves. Our lord was a good fellow, and a clever, with abundance of common sense, not altogether latent, even then; but he could not have denied himself the satisfaction of passing for a brother of his sovereign.

Amongst other civilities, his Highness the Sultan of Bruni

begged a passage on the yacht for Pangeran Mudah Kassim, his uncle, as far as Singapore. That high and well-born chief was charged to protest against the demoralizing system of the Sarawak Government, which caused thousands of tax-paying Dyaks to emigrate from Bruni every year. After the salute and the compliments, Archer could not well refuse a charge which is levied upon his sister's men-o'-war continually. And the proceedings of a great Malay noble must be interesting to watch. So he assented gladly, and upon the day appointed, long before his lordship had thought of rising, the Pangeran with his suite had assisted at a *fonicion* of the Moolahs, had received the Sultan's last instructions, had heard a serenade from his wives, and had come on board. More even than that, the vessel was under way before Lord Archer turned out. Coming on deck at last for early coffee, at an hour when his guests thought the day half done, he found the Pangeran seated in a full blaze of sunshine on the fo'k'sle, grave, majestic, yet polite, as are all of his race, hot or cold, noble or plebeian. Archer desired him to take shelter at once, and easily translated his request through an English-speaking seaman of the crew. But the Pangeran, still polite, bowed this person away, and demanded his own interpreter.

The interpreter came—a being quite as grave, as majestic, and as polite as his master—arrayed in homespun silk, cloth of gold, Persian turban, and jewelled kris. He raised his hands above his head to take the order, and again to repeat it. Upon this intimation the Pangeran smiled and rose, leaning on the shoulders of two or three attendants, and deviously made his way aft. Amongst those funny facts which delight the ethical philosopher, there is none more droll than the affectation of seasickness by Malay nobles. It is aristocratic to be ill among a people nine-tenths of whom are born upon the water, as one may say.

So the Pangeran staggered to his cabin, just as though he had not sailed the seas as a pirate since he was born. And there,

perched upon the bed, he chewed betel on the sly, smoked long cigarettes, and exchanged remarks about the weather, with his suite squatted round him, who overflowed into the saloon. Nothing did he want to know about steam-engines or general science, in explaining which Lord Archer had anticipated no small contentment. Coming on deck he assisted at the winding of chronometers, the display of sextants, and all the rest, without any interest at all. Lord Archer concluded that the Pangeran was a fool; wherein he mistook. What was shown to Mudah Kassim he had seen a dozen times, and he had quite intelligence enough to know its value. But he was intelligent enough to perceive, also, that mere questions would not enable him to understand the matter; and a Malay of rank dares not, if he would, profess himself ignorant, *ab initio*, and ask for the alphabet of science. He has his dignity to keep up. It is not stupid pride, like the Chinaman's, that makes him profess indifference to the wonders of European knowledge, but rather a consciousness of his own inferiority, and a politic resolve to keep it hidden.

But Lord Archer thought his guest a fool, and left him alone. Two days out from Bruni a sudden calm befell the voyagers, and it was necessary to make steam. During this pause his lordship, standing impatient on deck, heard a voice which he thought to have left five hundred miles behind him. "Perhaps the lord might think," it said, "as this is an opportunity for that there butt!"

Ah, but Archer's face was a sight to see as he turned! The Ancient Mariner may have beheld some such expressions, when "each turned his face with a ghastly pang and cursed him with his eye!" Behind his lordship stood the interpreter, Persian turban, cloth of gold, kris, and all. Archer stood speechless with rage, whilst the other smiled blandly. "Who the —— and what the ——!" and so on, his lordship began.

"Oh, if it ain't convenient just now, there's no hurry," said the

interpreter submissively. "Any time as suits the lord will do for me!"

"D——, death, and despair! Macnab, put her about, and run her ashore! I won't have this man on my yacht. It's monstrous! Turn up all hands! Run her on the coast anywhere, and land this —— this impostor! Belongs to the Pangeran? He doesn't! He's a stowaway, &c."

The Yankee listened with no emotion visible, except curiosity. "As to the matter o' fac'," he calmly said, at length, "the lord is wrong. I'm entered on his highness's service, and he's detailed me as his uncle's interpreter. The captain will do as he thinks proper, but the above fac' may be relied on." It proved to be so, and Lord Archer's only comfort lay in forbidding the poop to his enemy, and scowling at him from that elevation. In a day or two they would reach Singapore, and then this incredible annoyance must cease. Meantime the interpreter showed such respect as was almost more than human. He salaamed to his lordship's back, and smiled in reply to the most terrible frowns.

Singapore was made again. The Pangeran, with much polite formality, expressed his thanks, and entered a boat despatched by the Datu Tumangong. His interpreter accompanied, bowing and smiling to the last. "Thank Heaven!" Archer cried, and went to dine with the governor.

Next morning the captain came to him with an odd look on his face. "That there American, my lord," he said, with some embarrassment, "he's alongside in a sampan——"

"Sink her!" cried Archer, starting up in his sleeping-drawers. "Don't let him on board; sink her, with him in it."

"He don't want to come on board, my lord, but he do want to know——" The captain's respect gave way, and he exploded.

"Well, sir?" replied Archer, sternly.

"He do want to know, my lord, if——whether"——explosion——

"excuse me, my lord—whether this be a fine day for the exercise your lordship knows on?"

In cambric shirt and muslin pajamas his lordship rushed on deck, and threatened, I don't know—nor did he—exactly what.

The Yankee answered, "Quite so. Then I'll draw off a bit, and wait!" He did so, posting his sampan some twenty yards from the yacht, where his men lighted a fire and began to cook breakfast. Ten times while he was dressing did Lord Archer pause to examine this portent and to swear at it; ten times during first breakfast he got up to look again, and found no change. The Yankee was invisible beneath his shady roof of kajangs; but when his lordship appeared on deck, he popped out to smile and bow. His lordship, white and trembling with passion, ordered a boat, but before it could reach water the sampan crew had pitched their charcoal overboard and squatted ready. They followed the yacht's boat, pulled up at the jetty, and their master stood on land before his lordship. All the morning he pursued, on foot or in gharry, respectful but absurd. Archer was not a man to stand much of this sort of thing in the temperate zone; out yonder it would soon have killed him with rage and ridicule. His pride of place did him good stead for once, since it alone protected the Yankee from a personal assault. His lordship paid visits where he would not have dreamed of setting foot—breakfasted actually at a "go-down," called at others, and drove to Tanglin. The pursuer waited here and there and everywhere, finally galloping after his victim in a hackgharry to the suburb, attending his leisure there, and returning after him to the very man-ropes of his yacht. The next dawn found him posted in the sampan, just where he lay the day before.

Lord Archer wanted to set sail at once, but his captain dared not face the China Seas without a thorough overhauling. Then, as the days passed, and this intolerable nuisance suffered no abatement, he proposed to end his trip and return by the P. and O. alone; but to that his friends objected. Then he took legal

advice, but the authorities, convulsed with laughter, could give him no aid. Singapore was so much amused by the story that it made water-picnics to observe persecutor and persecuted. Things could not go on thus.

One night, returning from shore, his lordship enjoyed a brief gleam of happiness. The sampan was not visible, as they drew near the yacht; something must have occurred to interrupt his enemy's vigilance. But whilst hugging himself with his triumph, Lord Archer, who held the yoke-lines, saw the sampan crossing his bows. In his rage he cried suddenly, "Give way, men!" and steered full at her, struck her amidships, and sank her in a second. It was done with an impulse of madness. Archer could scarcely swim, but in wild remorse he was about to spring overboard. The sailors were all up and leaning over the thwarts to aid. By daylight your Malay cares nothing for an overturn, for he can dodge a shark in its own element. But by night, when waves roll black as thunder-clouds, or break in dazzling floods of silver, the sharks and the sword-fish have a terrible advantage. But they missed their chance that night. Within a space of fifty seconds every one of the shipwrecked had deftly clambered into the boat, and his lordship himself it was who helped his foe aboard, lifting him by the coat-collar. As soon as he had spirted the salt water from his mouth, he said, "There mout be a fine day to-morrow for that there exercise!"

A sudden revulsion of feeling showed his lordship this affair in a new light. He began to laugh more heartily than any one, and when, in half-a-dozen strokes, they reached the yacht, he asked his persecutor down into the cabin. "Now, my man," said Archer, "what is it you want after all?"

"I want a passage home to California."

"Why, that you had with me, before beginning this foolish affair."

"Yes, but I want to land in California with one hundred pounds in my pocket."

In the fulness of his heart Archer said, laughing, "You unconscionable rogue! What do you want it for?"

The fellow saw his point was gained. With a droll look he replied gravely, "To play brag with, if the lord pleases."

The lord is not fond of allusions to this tale, but even now he declares that one hundred pounds was never laid out to more purpose or amusement.

THE RESURRECTION OF ASHANTI.

ON returning from Bulgaria, after the war, I found amongst my accumulated papers a roll of manuscript and a note, which explained that as I had been the cause of the writer's journey into West Africa, to me he sent the result of his experiences. In certain articles which I published in the *Field* just after the Gold Coast Expedition, I alluded to the enormous wealth of Ashanti in gold dust and nuggets. Various persons communicated with me on this subject, amongst them a Mr. Kean, whose signature I recognized in the note mentioned. I did my best to deter intending emigrants, knowing what risk they must encounter in those realms abandoned by heaven and abhorred of man. The correspondence dropped, and I forgot it. But Mr. Kean and his friends, as I now learn, had not lost courage. They set out towards the end of 1874, and the survivor returned July '78. The manuscript forwarded to me is a diary, containing little of interest to the public until the writer lands us in Coomassie itself. Here Mr. Kean had the luck to behold events of the strangest sort, so dramatic and so thrilling that one would scarce believe the story were it quite unconfirmed. But I have reason to know that the private advices of the Colonial Office accord with this report, which is that of an eye-witness.

I will briefly summarize a very few notes from the record of the journey up. Mr. Kean was accompanied by two friends who had both "served," as appears incidentally; their initials only

are given. Cape Coast Castle he describes as a place where every naked rascal now sports gold all over his body and indulges the luxury of six wives at least. The Fantees have not yet digested that half-million sterling which we distributed among them. The adventurers were treated rather cavalierly at Government House, behaviour which Mr. Kean explains by a curious anecdote. He writes :—"Strangers are suspiciously regarded just now. When the war broke out, Colonel Harley confiscated all the gunpowder on the coast, disregarding the protest of the owners. He stored his plunder in a hulk, which unfortunately leaked, and when, after peace was proclaimed, the merchants sent to recover it, they found nothing but paste. Compensation was demanded, and refused by the local government, though the Colonial Secretary backed up the traders. Upon receiving notice from home, a few weeks ago, that an official had been charged to investigate, the acting governor pitched every keg overboard, politely recommending the merchants to take their change out of the Atlantic. Every stranger who arrives at present is thought to be an avenging personage from England." I repeat the story as I find it.

The day after landing, these gentlemen went to Asseyboo, where our fortifications could be no longer recognized, so completely were they overgrown. Taking it in turns to visit the town, with much difficulty they engaged eight hammock-bearers, six carriers, and my ex-servant Yampon, as interpreter. Excepting the latter, these were all Ashanti prisoners, bought or rescued from the Fantee chiefs by Government. With this train they started for Dunquah, and so, day by day, through Mansoo, Faissoo, Sutah, and Barraco, to the Prah. The Fantees have not re-occupied this region, which was utterly wasted and washed with blood by the invaders ; but refugees from Adansi, who followed our retiring force, are gradually peopling it again. Their king dwelt at Prahsu, apparently most comfortable in the lines of the Houssa force which defended his new territory from an infuriated

suzerain. It is noted that, some days before Mr. Kean arrived, an Ashanti was caught whilst tempting Houssa policemen to desert. An ex-sergeant of Rait's artillery pitched this emissary into the Prah, "before the officer had seen him." The officer, I presume, was Captain Baker.

Crossing the river, our adventurers plunged into the Ashanti jungle. This belt of territory, indeed, has been waste land since the Akims were exterminated, but there used to be a few tiny settlements, which we fortified in the march up. It is now, or was at the time referred to, absolutely desert. Our great camps and stockades, trenches, barracks, and hospital huts, were standing as we left them, for the most part. Some had been burnt, probably by our camp-followers. Lianas and wild cucumbers clothed the walls, papaws and plantains had burst through the roofs. Mr. Kean was peculiarly affected at sight of Essiaman. Here we built a stockade of unusual strength, planting huge logs in the ground, and defending the entrances with scientific fortification. A wide clearing was cut all round. Not a sound or a motion broke the deep stillness as these daring fellows came out from the jungle. Under big trees, left for the purpose, stood our chairs and tables of split bamboo, carved with names that seemed homelike. An Alsopp's beer-bottle, stuffed with dead flies, remained erect upon one of them, and a belt, forgotten, hung mouldy on a branch above. The inscription, "J. Maclure, Old Black Watch," could still be traced. All the litter of a camp was strewn over the clearing, and I can well believe that the place seemed weird. Bandages lay curled and stiff in the hospital huts, mouldy cases for limbs far away.

Without meeting creature that lives, the party went on day by day, climbed the Adansi Hill, admired at Quisa the pretty palace of that sovereign whom they had left behind at Prahsu a fugitive, and reached the battle-field of Amoaful. Bones and skulls lay everywhere. In the bamboo sheds raised by Colonel Webber, after he had levelled all the village, some guards of the king of

Bequoi kept watch over the road. Courteously enough they invited the travellers to wait the result of their application to his Majesty. That sovereign did not press the Englishmen to visit him, doubtless ashamed of his fallen state, but he intimated that there was gold enough in his dominions. Polite excuses were sent, and without more formality the three started next day. The Bequoi soldiers watched them depart with some dissatisfaction, but they did not interfere. Next afternoon the party reached Adahsu, where they were surprised to find a high caboceer of Ashanti, with a strong escort. With further astonishment they perceived that this dignitary was expecting them. His men fired several volleys in token of welcome, and attended them across the bridge.

A hut had been cleared on the other bank—it was full of dressing rags and mouldy litter, relics of the battle. The soldiers mounted guard outside, and the caboceer squatted in a corner. After a while, he asked which of the three puissant seigneurs might be Captain Lees? This brought about an explanation, and the diggers learnt that political changes of the last importance were pending at Coomassie, which to attend Captain Lees had been invited from Cape Coast. This gentleman was administrator of Lagos at the time, and Acting Colonial Secretary; he is now Governor of the Coast Settlement. Upon finding his mistake, the caboceer hastily recrossed the river, assuring the Englishmen that they would be welcome at Coomassie all the same. He left an officer to attend them. The night was spent at Adahsu, and at dawn they started on the last march of this long journey, before Captain Lees' arrival. All along the route, here thickly peopled, the natives ran from their cassava fields to see them, but no ill-feeling was displayed. The officer passed them without inquiry through the customs barrier, and they entered Coomassie at length, about sunset, in the midst of an enormous crowd.

A caboceer met them at the market-place, and with a manner of high breeding he offered the travellers welcome. His sandals

were plated and adorned with little heavy figures in gold ; strings of nuggets encircled his arms and throat ; even the attendant slaves wore gold in abundance. The chief's umbrella was purple silk, heavily fringed with bullion, almost as large as a bell tent. He carried a staff headed with silver, and pointed like a lance, wherewith he "presented arms" in quaint burlesque of English custom. With ready wit the strangers, who had their guns in hand, returned the salute, and the caboceer was immensely gratified. His herald then came forth and proclaimed the might of Yina, king of Antoi, now present. The monarch then shook hands and laughed. Conducting the party across the market square, he apologized for the poor lodging to be offered them. The king had received short notice of their coming ; an unusual number of caboceers were staying in the town. In such polite discourse the stately chamberlain led the way through streets yet marked with fire, and in some places ruinous. An army of thatchers, stucco-makers, painters was breaking up for the night. Many houses had escaped our burning with the mere loss of roof ; on others the thick ornaments of stucco had cracked and dropped ; others had split in all directions.

The Englishmen found shelter in a building hastily but substantially repaired. Its walls had a dressing of lustrous cement, venetian red in hue, as far as one could reach ; stucco figures, and arabesques in high relief, covered the long, windowless façade, in the midst of which opened an alcove. This indispensable chamber of an Ashanti house resembles a large box in a theatre. It opens on to the street, whence visitors may enter it by a few broad steps, and a door at back communicates with the enclosed court-yard. Here is another such alcove, or perhaps two, cook-houses and sheds, whilst around a second court stand the huts of wives and female slaves belonging to the proprietor—empty, of course, when the Englishmen arrived.

These gentlemen possessed the turn of mind befitting people who plunge into adventure ; they took things as they came and

waited for explanations. The caboceer's slaves brought food of quaint but tasteful cooking, and they slept. In the morning, attended by Yampon and two "captains" appointed to their service, they strolled about the town. A noisy crowd followed, but it showed no ill-will. The scene was very bustling. The palace blown up could not be rebuilt, until—as one of the captains said, with an air of innocence—"our king drinks the salt water again at Coromantin;"—from this Fantee town the Ashantis carried off the masons and hewn stone with which they built their palace. Everywhere else slaves were toiling, men and women. In a clear space where two roads crossed, many hundreds were engaged on a large shed, walled with split bamboo and thatched with palm leaf, in imitation of our military huts. Chiefs, whose quality was shown by their silk robe and golden ornaments, passed in and out, giving directions. Some of them saluted the Englishmen in martial style, and shook hands cordially. Strolling further, they came upon a wattle-fence, surrounding many little huts. Here a cordon of guards abruptly turned them back, rating the captains for allowing this intrusion. The latter answered roughly, whilst Yampon whispered, "Him Koffee Kalkalli live there!"

Returning home, a sheep, a score of fowls, a jar of palm-wine, bunches of plantains, and three quills of gold dust were found awaiting them. The King of Antoi sent this "dash," with a message warning the puzzled travellers to be ready for his visit before sunrise. All afternoon, and great part of night, the bang of fire-arms scarcely ceased. Yampon explained that chiefs kept arriving for a grand ceremony on the morrow. At dawn came Yina in all his glory. Fifty men of his body-guard opened the procession, bearing guns painted with vermilion, which they swung round their heads in time to a savage chant. Two heralds followed, with silver-topped sticks, small plates of gold upon their breasts, and the clappers of their office. Then a body of "captains," or, as one might say, field officers, in graceful robes of silk

or native cloth, bracelets and ornaments of gold ; a gun-bearer after each of them. Followed the caboceers feudally dependent upon Antoi, riding in man-baskets borne by slaves, attended by umbrellas, stool-bearers, pipe-bearers, and servants. All this suite preceded the magnificence of Yina himself. He reclined in a basket covered with leopard skin and lined with scarlet cloth. Two huge slaves carried it shoulder high. After him marched a score of favourite "boys," one displaying his "stool" of cotton-wood, snow-white, gracefully carved, and bound with plates of silver, worked in *repoussé* ; another bore his fly-flapper, a white horse's tail, in a gold handle ; a third his state umbrella of velvet, crowned with a large heraldic device in solid gold ; a fourth his golden pipe, with filagree stem ; a fifth his gun and leopard-skin pouch, whereto hung a set of silver-handled knives ; a sixth his spittoon, a work of art in bronze ; a seventh his flask of palm wine in old *grès de Flandre*, and his calabash for drinking, bound with gold : to be brief, all carried some object of savage pomp, and the procession ended with a tumultuous escort of soldiers.

By help of all his slaves, Yina climbed out of his basket, presented arms—with their assistance—and ponderously mounted to the alcove. Two boys held him under the armpits, and two supported his wrists. When he reached their presence the Englishmen perceived at once the reason of this awkwardness. Several pounds weight of virgin gold hung on either arm. After exchanging courtesies, the party set forth, marching next before their patron. As this cavalcade reached the middle street, others of like splendour came winding from the crossways, and moved in a parallel line along the broad highway. All the population was in the street, or crowded upon the alcoves, so well fitted for beholding a public ceremony. Slower and slower grew the pace as train after train of chiefs fell into the line. The boisterous criticism and "chaff" which formerly distinguished a Coomassie mob were almost wanting, but now and again some shrewd comment would be uttered in the back ranks, making the people

yell with delight. The Englishmen caused great excitement, of course.

The space before that large shed already mentioned was kept by a force of clubmen. As each caboceer approached, his heralds went forward, and proclaimed their master's title and achievements. Precedence was not disputed at this solemn moment, though Ashantis are punctilious as any. The body-slaves, heralds, and such of the suite as claimed that privilege, passed into the building, whilst others sat upon the earth in rows, making a dense oval ring about it. The English party followed Yina, and seated themselves in the front row, Yampon attending with stools. Quickly and quietly the hall filled with chiefs, attired in the rich simplicity of their native costume—a silken *cummerbund*, or breechclout, fringed with gold, over it a single sheet of cloth, beautifully coloured, and draped in folds to delight a sculptor. They sat along three sides of the hall, leaving free the middle space and one end. About three hundred chiefs were present, and their slaves, who stood, were thrice as numerous. It was a grand council of the Ashanti nation.

A very old caboceer arose, when the hubbub had subsided. Mr. Kean thinks he was Essaman Quantah, whom we surprised at Borboriassi, where poor Nicol was killed. His slaves deftly loosed the enormous bracelets from his arm, and slipping his lean black shoulders from the spotless robe, he spoke with earnest eloquence. The old man's action was dignified, graceful, and subdued, adding force to vehement words. A low murmur of approval followed each apostrophe, and some of the audience wept, some flung their arms so that the heavy bracelets clashed, some hid their faces. By times the orator raised his voice and paused for a reply, which was given in a deep, hoarse growl. One would like to have that speech in English, for Essaman Quantah—if he it was—told the history of our war, with details which we shall never hear. And he finished by arraigning Koffee Kalkalli, his king, as the destroyer of Ashanti.

When this old man had dropped again upon his stool, and folded his robe around him, one after another several chiefs addressed the council briefly. Then there was a general movement. The slaves pushed forward, each to his own master, and aided him to rise; not a few were actually helpless beneath their weight of gold. A word, evidently assent, passed all along the line, and they resealed themselves. Six court heralds, with long staves silver-mounted, bearing the sacred *plaque* of gold upon their breasts, solemnly passed down the middle and out. "They go fetch him, Koffee Kalkalli," whispered Yampon, whose eyes rolled with excitement. These proceedings, of course, were all a mystery to the Englishmen at that time, but they afterwards came to understand them.

A quarter of an hour passed in silence, until the heralds returned, and their spokesman delivered his report. Mr. Kean gives the substance of it from after-knowledge. They had found the king in his palace of boughs and brush, seated upon the royal stool. His wives, children, and slaves lay about him, inside a ring of powder kegs connected with a train of gunpowder. So prepared for any fate, he expected the resolution of his nobles, with a calmness and a dignity beyond those of mythic Sardanapalus. To the heralds' message he replied that if the council would give him a safe-conduct, he was ready to attend; if not, he was ready to die. This rather dramatic announcement did not seem to affect the chiefs. It was apparently the sort of thing they looked for; but the safe-conduct was granted by acclamation, and without more words the heralds withdrew. "Koffee Kalkalli him come now," muttered Yampon awfully. And he came, preceded by the heralds only, in perfect trust upon the word of his caboceers—a man, as Mr. Kean describes him, of no heroic mould, yet every inch a king. Moderate of stature and heavily built, very black, deeply scored with small-pox, he needed all the strength of innate majesty to preserve a royal air in such a case. His dress was the plainest there, distinguished only by its pattern,

sacred to the royal blood. Scarcely any ornaments hung about him, and no weapon. Gravely and calmly he walked up the hall, quietly swinging a fly-whisk. The caboceers, though they did not rise nor prostrate themselves before a king denounced, slipped the robe from their shoulders in token of respect. The Englishmen could not but think of that scene in their history when a monarch was brought to trial; and they did honour to the chivalry of these negroes.

Koffee Kalkalli stood in the space where his golden stool should have been set, and spoke with simple dignity. We know what he said: that the fetish had abandoned him, that he had nothing to plead against his deposition. As a man, he might urge that advisers had deceived and betrayed him. Many persons present could bear witness how, in the first place, he disliked the war, and how, again, he had wished to defend the Adansi Hills rather than stake the empire at Amoafu. "That you all know," he said in effect, "and how I was overruled by Amanquattiah. But these excuses, which would avail a captain, are not to be used by the King of Ashanti. The fetish is against me, and that is enough. Your king must be a favourite with the gods. Therefore I acknowledge your charges just, and, since you spare my life, I again take the place from which my mother raised me. My stool is waiting. If this palaver is finished, I will seat myself amongst you." A murmur passed round, and one of the heralds ushered in a stool-bearer. Room was made amongst the small body of caboceers who wore a tartan robe like his own, and Koffee Kalkalli took his place. With eyes bent down he softly brushed patterns in the sand with his fly-whisk.

I may pass lightly over the ceremonies following, which seemed almost dull after this strange scene. The king being deposed, Ashanti royalty lapsed to his mother, who held it by right. Once more the heralds went forth in state, officially to apprise the queen of these events, and beg her to nominate another sovereign. They returned shortly, for all the affair was pre-arranged. Koffee's

next brother was the queen's choice, and he rose straightway from his seat amongst the princes, whilst every one fell upon his face except the English, who bowed, and received a stare. Then the royal "stool" came in, a high-backed chair, elaborately carved, and studded with gold nails. This was set at the end of the hall, and a crowd of officials took place behind it. But something else was wanted—the regalia, and, above all, that old and sacred image of Ashanti royalty, the footstool of Denkera. For these things Koffee Kalkalli sent a token to the palace, some small object hanging at his wrist. The regalia had been sadly thinned by our exactions, but it made a fair show, and after it followed twelve brawny slaves, staggering beneath the famous nugget, largest probably in all the world. They bore it suspended on a male bamboo. By Mr. Kean's account, which agrees with that of others who have seen it, the "footstool" of Ashanti is some eighteen inches long, twelve wide, and ten high, a mass of virgin gold, smoothed by generations of royal feet. The glory of it ruined Denkera, which was attacked and enslaved for the crime of possessing such a marvel. In ordinary times it stands by the king's bedside, and on it he puts his foot when rising. We nearly secured the spoil when Lord Gifford dashed for the palace at Coomassie; he missed it by only a few moments.

This grandest of trophies was set beneath the chair, and the new king seated himself. Every chief crouched on hands and knees, with forehead bent to the ground, waiting his turn to do homage. The first in order of precedence was Koffee Kalkalli, who prostrated himself before the throne, clasping his brother's feet. The king took his hand and spoke kindly; Koffee answered in clear tones, and a visible thrill passed through the audience. Again the king replied in two or three words, and his luckless brother spoke with passionate supplication. An angry clamour filled the hall, and many chiefs half rose; but the king looked round him savagely, and the murmurs stilled. He turned to an official near, and briefly gave some order; Koffee Kalkalli rose

stooping, and dropped upon his knees beside the throne, whilst each caboceer did homage in turn.

The explanation of this episode is perhaps more strange than all we have had before. Whilst lying before his brother's feet, Koffee asked a grace, which was allowed without inquiry. Well might the chiefs exclaim, for what this outcast king requested was to command the armies of Ashanti. His prayer was granted on the spot, and an order given for the customary "dash," or present.

Yina's turn to do allegiance came immediately after that of the blood royal, for of all subordinate kings who had precedence of Antoi not one was left. Djabin and Bequoi and Adansi we shall account for presently; Mampon lay ill of his wound from an English bullet; Admutin and Inkoransa had simply ignored the summons to attend. Mr. Kean and his comrades were puzzled how to act, when, with a pleasant smile, Yina motioned them to follow him. But there was no time to hesitate. Whilst their friend fell upon his face, they bowed and frankly put out their hands. The king stared, frowned, smiled, and took them. After this ceremony the Englishmen retired.

Before pointing out, with the utmost brevity, a few of those impressions and considerations suggested to Mr. Kean by these events, I must observe that the story here narrated by an eye-witness is known to be true. Official reports confirm this account of Koffee Kalkalli's deposition, and all that remains for me to tell. How can we call a people barbarous who show such mutual trust, such confidence in the national patriotism, and such established order? The behaviour of these negroes is a cruel contrast with that of our own forefathers in a case somewhat similar, or with that of Frenchmen at a later date. There is not anything to dwell upon in the calm and dignified despair of a ruined monarch. Contempt of death is a virtue usual enough amongst savages, and special to kings sated and sick of pleasure. But the unhesitating reliance of Koffee Kalkalli upon the honour of his chiefs, transmitted

in mere words by a herald, is significant of a state of things to which we have scarcely reached. The ease with which he dropped to an inferior position, and the confidence of all parties that he could be safely left therein, are facts yet more striking to show the stability of affairs in this negro realm. Fancy a sovereign of Europe, deposed for treason to the state—since the charge amounted to that—retiring to a private station without one word of distrust from any quarter! But here we have matters stranger still. Not only does the monarch thus withdraw, he ventures even to ask his successor for the chief command of all his armies, and receives it. Truly, the chiefs protested against this favour, but they did so, as afterwards appeared, not because they feared misuse of authority, but because they thought the man incompetent. It seems to me that the despised Ashantis teach a lesson here to make our "noble selves" feel shame. If a European people emulated their example, it would be thought mad, and justly. For, in truth, we have not yet reached, nor have ever enjoyed, that orderly system of government and social ethics which would enable us to even fancy a blessed era when such a council might be held in Europe, a fallen king might be so honourably treated, and such absolute trust might be reposed in the good faith of all parties. History has no period to describe wherein these things might have been, and the tendency of "civilization" forbids us to hope that such a time may be in store.

The Englishmen had enough to talk about when they regained their dwelling. But a din of horns and songs and guns exploding almost silenced them. The grand rejoicings were held in the market square, and in that broad street opening from it, but stray merry-makers wandered over all the town, with torches and fantastic costumes. Not a few who passed their alcove bore red paint-marks on the forehead, which Yampon explained to signify that the wearer was drunk, or seriously meant to drown his reason forthwith. Here, again, was something to admire in the Ashanti

rules of life. Drunkenness with this strange people is no excuse for crime ; but if a man paint himself upon the forehead, so that all passers-by may see, it rests with the injured victim to show that he made every effort to avoid assault. Prejudice apart, this is a custom brimming with sense, and the great test of laws, the working, justifies it amply. Ashantis drink, as all men will whose life is uncertain and vitality strong ; but broils are rare, for they happen only when one drunkard meets another.

Towards nine o'clock, when the town grew quieter, the King of Antoi arrived. He brought with him a negro from Assinee, who spoke French currently, and a few slaves bearing cushions and mats. The visit was plainly *incognito*. After a few minutes' talk he led the Englishmen into their courtyard, which they found lit up with torches. Seats were placed in the back alcove, the slaves served coffee in the Arab manner, and withdrew ; the influence of Arabs at Coomassie is everywhere conspicuous, and all the population will embrace Islam if our missions do not bestir themselves. At the king's request Yampon also retired, and the interpreter blocked every door. Then Yina spoke, cautiously and slowly, waiting until his every word had been translated and understood. He said, in effect, " You English have come to seek gold in our mines. It will not be needful to dig for it. Drill our young men to fight in the English way, and we will give you more dust than you can carry."

This proposal did not quite astonish the Englishmen, but they asked further information. " Listen ! " said the caboceer. " Ashanti is the highest tree of the forest, but many great trunks stood beside it. We had three allied kingdoms, Djabin, Bequoi, and Adansi. They have all fallen away. Adansi has crossed the Prah ; Bequoi robs our traders and insults our king ; Djabin is making friendship with Gammoo, our ancestral foe. Ashanti stands alone, without stores or arms or soldiers, amidst the pack of her hounds. She will pour out her gold for the white man's fetish."

In answer to questions, Yina continued: "We have 10,000 fighting men, guns for 3000, but very little powder as yet. Bequoi has near 20,000 men, 6000 guns, and powder enough. But we do not fear him if Djabin will rest quiet. We are getting powder and arms from Assinee, and they are coming in fast. My friend here,"—he meant the interpreter—"brought us 300 kegs last night. As for men, we are recruiting in Houssaland, as the English did, and forty young braves have already arrived. In two months' time we shall have 200 Houssas, armed with the English guns which fire without loading; we have the arms now, but no one amongst us knows the drill. Teach us that and we will cover you with gold."

"What is the force of Djabin?" asked the Englishmen, curious to measure the strength of the late empire.

"I am a caboceer of Ashanti, and I do not lie!" answered Yina. "Djabin can place 50,000 men in the field, with thousands of guns. If Djabin moved now, he could eat up Ashanti and Bequoi together. But he will not move. We have sent him presents and messages. He sleeps, and he shall not wake till our umbrellas are planted before his walls. I have told you everything. Will you give us your fetish?"

The terms of the bargain are not stated. I hope that in accepting them our countrymen were influenced as much by admiration for a gallant race, hard pressed, as by the riches offered. And here the MS. ends abruptly, torn across the page. We know what has happened, but all lovers of adventure must pray that Mr. Kean will tell us in detail how the resurrection of Ashanti was effected. He must have beheld strange scenes, campaigning with Koffee Kalkalli. The new king waited patiently, bearing affronts and injuries, till his preparations were complete; then, like a wild cat springing, he struck at Bequoi. His "Houssa regiment," armed with breechloaders and led by Europeans, cut through the enemy's line in an hour's fighting, and the rout was utter. The King of Bequoi fell on the field, and within a month

his people were serving in the Ashanti armies. Koffee Kalkalli was merciful, as negro mercy goes. Djabin took alarm, and stirred a little, but the Ashanti beauties sent into his harem for that very purpose, soothed their master's fears. Nevertheless, some preparations were made, and when, twelve months after, Koffee Kalkalli opened his second campaign, Djabin was ready. Three days the battle lasted, for the odds were enormous against Ashanti, but arms and discipline prevailed. The rebel king disappeared; so did his capital. Not a mark remains to show where Djabin stood, saving a wide bare space in the forest. One after another all the kingdoms around have been "eaten up," and Ashanti rules supreme and unchecked over a larger space than ever owned her sway. The king is still dutiful and indeed obsequious in his dealings with Cape Coast Castle; but how long will it be ere he feel himself strong again for another struggle with the white man's fetish? He has, for the first time, a standing army, a disciplined force of Houssas excellently armed, and money unlimited. From the crushing blow we dealt her, and from the treacherous defection of her allies, this nation has recovered in four years, and at the present moment she is stronger and more ambitious than for two generations past. Let those of the late government who persuaded us to keep the Gold Coast now observe the situation there, and tell us what to do. For those who served in the war are puzzled.

THE RETURN FROM CANDAHAR.

At a time when General Stewart is preparing to renew the unfinished operations of last year, when General Hughes is again on the march to Khelat-i-Ghilzai and beyond, it is seasonable to record a few incidents of the late campaign which passed without notice. The advance from Sukkur to Khelat-i-Ghilzai was reported mail after mail by those correspondents of the press who accompanied the column. But when the public gradually perceived that no serious fighting could be expected, its interest in the movements waned. And at the same moment news vastly more exciting began to arrive from South Africa. Thus it happened that the return march drew scarcely any notice, and the adventures of those who went through Candahar to India were absolutely unchronicled, so far as we know. General Stewart left Khelat-i-Ghilzai on February 2nd, under the circumstances explained below. The brief extracts of correspondence which follow show a state of affairs which the public probably has not suspected.

Sir Mohammed, *Feb. 4.*

. . . Our camels had been vanishing at the rate of fifty to seventy a day, on the route from Candahar to Khelat-i-Ghilzai. The number lost since the 15th ult. has not been less than nine hundred. Some of these, bought in the country, have escaped; others have been fraudulently sold; others stolen; others have

strayed. But the great majority are dead. One hundred and eighty bodies might be counted in one Golgotha beneath the fort. Hence arose a difficulty when we were instructed to retire. By borrowing from the brigade of General Hughes, we contrived to mobilize the head-quarters and escort; but at the cost of leaving Hughes an absolute fixture. Barter's brigade had never reached Khelat-i-Ghilzai, halting at Jaldak, two marches in rear. Thither we retired yesterday, leaving Hughes, as I have stated. Fane's cavalry brigade, also with transport borrowed from the luckless Hughes, should have come in to-day, but the weather has stopped it, as we ourselves are stopped. Large bodies of troops cannot move together at any time, owing to the scarcity of forage. The country has been mapped out, such and such villages being set down to feed each brigade as it passes through. Some prove to be blanks, some prizes, but whatever the fortune of war, those manors appropriated to troops in rear must not be encroached upon. A busy life has the commissariat officer under such circumstances.

Last night, for the first time, we had snow, and the day is miserable beyond description. We cannot march, for the camels could not bear our dripping tents, and they would certainly split open in the effort. Such is the clumsy beast's fate if it try to walk in mud. Our camp is pitched across ploughed fields, ankle deep in slush. A shrewd and piercing wind brings gusts of rain each hour. There is no comfort in our tents, which sway and fill as the wind drags at the heavy canvas. Pegs will not hold in the sodden earth. No ray of hope steals through the melting sky, which seems to spill itself upon the crags that bound our narrow horizon. These are dappled and streaked with snow, fleecy with mist. Lumps of dirty snow lie frozen in every hollow. The wind is still high. Several tents were blown over last night, and some new to campaigning made experience of the most ridiculous misfortune that can befall a human being. Here we cannot feel the very worst discomfort of such an accident, for

everybody sleeps in flannel waistcoat, besides jacket and pyjamas, felt boots, and woollen helmet. Four natives dead of cold last night.

Sokta, *Feb. 6.*

The snow-storm cost us three hundred camels at least, and many burdens were left by the path side on to-day's march. A welcome convoy of boots and other things we met on the road; possibly the head-quarter mess will once more enjoy bread, tea, sugar, and—think of it!—rum! A number of waterproof sheets are invoiced, to our great rejoicing, for I regret to confess to you that the troops had not hitherto been provided with that article. At Jaldak we were obliged to leave behind three companies of the Rifles, and the rest of that regiment, with the 15th Sikhs, must be deserted here. General Barter remains with them, of course, and we requisition their transport. Really, if this goes on, the general will return from his triumphant march with the escort *et præterea nihil*. And this is the result of thirty-six hours' snow and rain! Suppose it had lasted for a week—suppose it had happened every other day since December, as we had every reason to expect! Suppose the Ghilzais had been hostile, or had hidden their supplies of food! Let us not think of it. Loss of camels means absolute loss of transport, the abandonment of tents and baggage when the thermometer runs to zero constantly, and *never* marks less than twenty degrees of frost at night. Mem.: Out of all the boots, only two hundred pair were fitted for Europeans. Our men are almost barefoot.

Candahar, *Feb. 11.*

It has happened as I lightly predicted. At Robut, the 15th Hussars were left behind, with the battery, D-2. General Stewart rode in to-day, at the head of his escort and nothing else, leaving his command dotted along the way we have come. And yet there has been no more rain nor snow!

An evil fate hangs around this city, disconcerting the best

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arrangements of the Quartermaster-General's department. We lost our way on first entering it, we lost our way going out of it, and we had much difficulty in finding our way back. No guide met us, to show the new quarters chosen for the general, and we enjoyed a steeple-chase over banks and watercourses as before. Our former camp at this place was pitched across the Cabul road, to bar any dashing enterprise which the Ghilzais might undertake. Major St. John has now found a large garden, walled, intersected by two rapid streams, and provided with three kiosks. It is really a pretty spot, even now, when the earth is almost bare, and the trees leafless. The widow or widows of Muhammad Amin Khan dwelt here. This Sirdar was one of those numerous brothers who contested the throne with Shere Ali. He distinguished himself in that ferocious family by pistolling his nephew, Faiz Muhammad, at the battle of Kujhbaz. They tell how Shere Ali went mad of grief, throwing himself into a tank, with the exclamation that Faiz awaited him at the bottom. After Amin's death, his widow was allowed to live here, luckier than the family of Abdulrahman, he who has sought Russia's protection. In the citadel of Candahar, St. John found the mother and son of this exile, prisoners. The boy is some twelve years old, sufficiently intelligent, but so timid as to be incapable of understanding what a stranger says. In all the years of his life he remembers to have seen no human face, saving those of the jailer and of his grandmother. A thousand rupees have been granted to this ill-starred princess, wherewith to find lodgings and food until her friends can make arrangements.

The ladies of Muhammad Amin fled, or were carried off, when Mir Afzul withdrew. Various personages have already waited on the general, claiming this property, which, according to the statement, had been seized by force from the rightful owners. It is quite a respectable suburban residence. The high mud walls enclose some four or five acres, planted with fruit and flowering trees, thoroughly irrigated, and abounding in spinach. The

main entrance opens on the north-east, where two streams give some defence if the bridges were destroyed. Under the northern wall, betwixt that and the water, lies a range of stabling and servants' quarters. An avenue of willows by the stream leads to another bridge, over which lies the principal dwelling, two stories high, if the subterranean chambers be reckoned. The number and the arrangement of these show what awful heat we may expect in summer. A flight of steps leads from the terrace to a suite of rooms on either hand, floridly decorated in the Persian style. Roses, and gilding, and carvings painted, cover walls and ceiling. The doors are most elaborate. But all is faded and broken, the roses chipped away, the ceiling gapped, the doors ill-fitting and shattered. A broken staircase leads to the roof, which is screened by a parapet of mud, still lofty towards the outside, but crumbled to a very trifling height on the garden front. Cypresses stand in avenues there, enormous bushes of jasmine and rose mark every corner. Some of these latter must spread over a space of thirty feet. In the midst of the garden lies a broad, square tank with a shattered fountain in the middle. Water once has flowed through it in a grand canal, some fifty feet of width, from terrace to terrace in a cataract. Large stepping-stones are neatly laid across the channel here and there. The general lives in the northern kiosk described, which, with Herat carpets on the floor, and a sufficiency of furniture, makes no unworthy residence. We are encamped across the garden in our tents, and the escort is pitched some two hundred yards away outside the walls. Pray heaven that the Ghazis, the fanatic assassins, do not learn this disposition. They might creep up through the trees, and massacre the general himself, before his escort could be roused. Several times Major St. John has been warned that an attack would be made at night. . . .

. . . . It is really a wonderful place, the citadel of Candahar. The state apartments, all paint and coloured stucco, are used by Gholam Hussein, as commandant. St. John dwells in the

quarters once devoted to the governor's hareem. One passes from one ruinous courtyard to another, from garden to garden, and tank to tank, as in a maze. The engineers are knocking down and filling up, levelling, making gateways through, and constructing roads. Very well satisfied are they with the working capacity of the Pathan ; but up to the present they have failed to make the enormous space intelligible. I lose myself whenever I visit St. John. It is easy to distinguish the older parts from the modern. These latter are flimsy, though highly coloured, but the former solid as stone, their edges and apertures clean cut after centuries of wear. The waterworks of the citadel were once elaborate, and the large gardens must still be handsome with the beauty of untended nature, when the irrigated beds are full of bloom, and the fine trees out in leaf. Balconies elaborately carved but crumbling overlook these pleasaunces, from whence the ladies of the garrison gazed down as they smoked the gurgling hookah.

I could scarcely describe the Ark, as it is called, in a manner to be quite intelligible. It is a wilderness of filthy little rooms, broken staircases, shattered walls, gaping roofs, withered gardens, and fetid tanks. Here and there a fragment of stucco, painted in the Persian style with roses, or stamped with arabesques of excellent design, shows the miserable remnants of magnificence. Where the Governor stowed his numerous family is a puzzle. I do not profess to have explored a quarter of the enormous building, but those dwelling in it are equally at loss. The durbar hall is pretty, a small chamber with a large pillared window. Upon the walls innumerable rose-trees in full bloom are painted, and the stucco roof is fretted with deep mouldings of most brilliant colour. Bits of looking-glass have been fixed therein, after the Cabuli taste—which is by no means bad, though strange to our eyes. At Lahore one sees the same fancy in Runjeet Singh's palace, but the frames there are silvered, and the general effect is not only richer, but vastly more tasteful. These fragments, and

the larger mirrors placed at intervals along the wall, lie shattered on the floor. It is uncertain whether the refuse of the town, or Mir Afzul's troops, by his order, destroyed the fittings of the place ; but, as a fact, not a pane of glass remains, nor a stick of furniture. The very fragments have vanished, saving two carved posts, which look like those of a bedstead.

In the arsenal, when we marched in, lay heaps of rubbish in the shape of old accoutrements, broken guns, and such like ; nothing of use except the powder. This, of excellent quality, was ranged in open jars and iron chests, strewn over the ground, disposed in sacks. So dangerous was the Citadel from this cause, that no person wearing spurs was allowed to enter.

Chaman, *Feb. 27th.*

On the 20th inst. the last troops returning by Jacobabad left Candahar. These were the head-quarters and three companies, 26th N.I., and I-1 battery R.A., Major Lewes. With them marched the half troop of 15th Hussars, under Lieut. Sewell, which has hitherto been attached to General Stewart's escort ; it rejoins the regiment, and proceeds homeward by the new route, through Tal and Chotiali. Fifty European invalids, mostly belonging to the luckless 70th, fifty-one sick sepoys, and thirty-one sick followers, went down with us. We saw the last of Candahar streets about ten a.m., straggling in a long procession of camels and dhoolies, from the Arsenal Gate to that of Badurani. Misunderstanding the order, I strolled afoot to the Cabul Gate, having sent my horse thither round the walls. The streets were crowded, as usual, and the busy life of this great market in full swing. Beneath the trees on either hand—all leafless now, but full of shade and blossom in the summer—sit vendors of fruit and pastry, fried fish and butchers' meat, money-changers, beggars. At their backs, across the ditch, are shops of pottery and skins, saddlery, carpets, cotton goods, jewellery—Heaven knows what ! The central avenue is thronged, like Cheapside at its

busiest, by giants scowling and filthy, smooth Hindoos with the red seal on their foreheads, veiled women, faquirs, and noisome mendicants—a hideous crowd. Shall I ever forget, will any who were there, the walk down that bazaar when Willis lay dying in a side street, and his murderer lay supine, soaking the earth from a score of wounds?

On that fateful day I strolled into the town about half-past two, with several officers of the Head-quarter Staff. We entered by the Badurani Gate, crossing on our way three streams, and ditches innumerable. A lively market is established outside the walls, and the beggars of Candahar—a numerous clan—have fixed themselves in this quarter. By the roadside, upon faded carpets, hucksters offered to the passer-by grass and corn, pears, apples, quinces, melons, carrots, watercress, raisins, almonds, dry figs and apricots, small “dips” in bundles, and confectionery, with many another kind of ware which I forget. Laughing white soldiers and stately Sikhs, native grooms, Ghoorkas, camel-men and servants, made a bustling crowd between the rows.

Further on lay the great caravanseries, closed by a strong barrier of hurdles, where foreign merchants may leave their goods in safety whilst they carry samples into the bazaar. The size of these shows how important is the trade of Candahar. Each contains some score of small recesses round the central space, and they spread, one after another, all along the ditch. Leaving these aside, amidst the forts and strange outlying defences of the town, we reached the Badurani Gate, where a strong guard of rifles was posted. Like those of Shikarpore and Cabul, it is a massive structure, barred by doors of enormous height, encased in iron half-way up. Inside, the roadway takes a turn almost rectangular, so that an entering foe cannot bring his whole force to bear on the defenders.

A very crooked street leads to the main avenue, and thence, turning right, to the citadel. It is lined by blank mud walls, squalid in appearance. The few doorless openings show a dark

recess, littered with filth. Here and there lie great gaps full of *débris*, on the further side of which rises a broken house-wall, pierced with two or more tiers of windows. The glories of old Candahar are historical, but even this new city was a place vastly more important years ago, as its ruins bear testimony. Above the low hovels on each side one may observe a few loftier houses, such as those which have fallen ; upon their flat roofs probably a little group of women are watching us, the younger of them veiled. But ladies of Candahar need small persuasion to display their charms, if our younger officers speak truth. At the request conveyed by a smile and a motion of the hand, they ingeniously slip the veil aside, in the bazaar itself, and show a pretty, laughing face, as they run to escape the possible consequences. The greater part of those well dressed and thickly veiled are said to be remarkably fair, with magnificent eyes and supple figures.

Just after we passed the gate a Rifle serjeant hurrying by told us that Major St. John had been shot at, and that the people were dangerously excited. We pressed on at once, keeping together, reached the main street, planted with trees, and made for the citadel. Bugles were sounding, Sepoys and troopers pushing through the crowd, tulwar in hand. Many hundred English soldiers were in the town, and they preserved a creditable coolness, but the Ghoorkas outdid them. These small and weazened little heroes munched their fruit composedly, or bargained with the hucksters on the side-walk, as though the city was their own familiar home, and its fanatic inhabitants their brethren. It is probable that they did not know what had taken place.

Upon the Citadel-square the wing of the 25th Native Infantry, which garrisoned the place, was drawn up in companies. They directed us to one of the small recesses surrounding the square, and in a chamber, windowless, reeking, and black as a cellar, we found the man who had attacked Major St. John. This energetic officer is head of the political department attached to General

Stewart's force. He had great experience in Persia, where the telegraphs were laid by him, and the frontier of Beloochistan arranged. Before joining our expedition he was principal of the Mayo College at Ajmere, an institution devoted to the training of youths of noble blood who are born to high position in their States. Lord Mayo saw with alarm that the Princes of India are becoming more and more corrupt and dissipated. Deprived of their natural career in arms, and assured of a peaceful throne, they seek occupation in debauchery, to their own decay, and the misery of their subjects. To remedy this state of things the Mayo College was founded, and it contains at present forty boys of every creed, whose religious feelings are carefully respected, whilst they learn such ways of thought, and pursue such studies and exercises, as may give them interests in life other than the gymnastics of dancing girls and the excitement of bhang.

In accompanying our force Major St. John had a superintending charge of its relations with the natives, and at Candahar his every moment was engaged with complex duties. This day he was riding beside the Nawab Gholam Hussein towards the Ark, escorted by a crowd of city notables on horseback. The party had reached a spot some score of yards from the square, when a tall fellow sprang upon them, with the exclamation, as some say, "Are you Sandeman sahib?" put his hand upon St. John's knee, and fired a pistol in his face. The horse swerved suddenly, and the bullet passed betwixt St. John and the Nawab. An orderly behind instantly felled the villain with the flat of his sword, and he was carried off.

We found him in one of the dismal cells I have described, where Mir Afzul's guard used to sleep—a savage-looking ruffian, with bloody hair about his face, cruel eyes, crooked nose, hanging underlip, and receding chin, well dressed and well fed. It appears now that he was one of the Pathan Sepoys employed by the Khan of Khelat, a desperate crew, against whose doings Major Sandeman protested. Then we returned through the main

avenue. Sowars, lance in hand, sat on horseback under the trees; at every cross street a guard was posted. The throng was dense, and though we made a lane, every one might have been stabbed at every instant. Nowhere have I beheld such a show of villanous faces. Not a well-dressed man appeared, but a scowling, filthy crew of ragged ruffians flooded the roadway. Fakeers, half idiotic and wholly malignant, hurried from group to group; matted hair, and a cloth about their necks, was all their clothing. The scum of the town had assembled, full of hatred against the infidel, and wanting courage only for a massacre.

Each of those in our small party thought his last hour at hand, when a breathless sowar told us that an officer had been murdered, and that the Sahibs were standing back to back under the central dome. There was no time for words. We pressed forward, each man's hand upon his pistol. But no precautions would have availed us in that crush had we met an assassin. Curious it was to observe the sustained tranquillity of our soldiers under this excitement. Those not called upon for pickets bought their apples, and leisurely ate them on the deserted side-walks, whilst we struggled through the mass in the centre. Many were unarmed, but these not at all dismayed. At a signal they would have thrown themselves upon the townsmen, nor have doubted the result; for Stewart's regiments, be it observed, were veterans, saving the 70th.

When at length we struggled to the dome, we found it empty, guarded at each exit by half a company of the 25th, who rolled the thronging natives over with a push of their stalwart arms if they approached too near. A few yards further lay the assassin in a pool of blood. It seems that Lieutenant Willis, of I-1 Battery, was buying something outside a shop, when a fanatic crept behind him and drove a long curved knife to the hilt in his shoulder. Mr. Willis dropped instantly, but his companion struck the man, who turned and ran. Officers fired their revolvers, and three bullets hit him, it appears. It happened that

several gunners of the same battery and several of the 60th Rifles were about the place, and these drew their swords. As usual, they proved quite useless, the blows failing to cut even the murderer's *posteen*. A bombardier who struck him full on his bare head, without injury, received a stab through the hand. A rifleman, after an effort equally ineffectual, was wounded in the shoulder and the arm. Captain Harvey, of the 1st Punjab Cavalry, delivered his point, and thrust the villain through the throat, but received himself a stab in the hand.

A lucky shot rolled the fellow over, but he rose again staggering. At this instant a mounted trooper overtook him, and with one blow of his tulwar cut deep into his throat, almost severing the neck. And so he died at length, and we found him weltering in the street. A few yards back, in the road which leads to the Cabul Gate, lay Mr. Willis on the bare ground amongst mounted officers and a crowd of men, who kept the roadway clear.

They were other sights that drew my notice in that last visit to Candahar. The little incidents of Oriental life so amused me that I wandered on to the large domed edifice which spans the crossing of the main streets, unheeding that I was alone. Here, by the roadside, an improvisatore held his little group of burly listeners enthralled. With quick and eager gesture he recited some wild tale of love and feud, throwing his lean body into postures of absurd affectation. Farther on, I beheld a very pretty sight. Four tiny children drew to the stall where an ancient huckster sold some compound like thickened milk. The eldest may have been four years of age, of sex uncertain, and they were all chubby, large-eyed mites, very gravely intent upon the business before them. Each carried a wooden spoon, and the foremost clutched some copper coins, for which the old man held out his hand. Then he set the children of a row upon the ground, and gave to each a plate of roughest earthenware, containing the substance aforesaid. The little spoons came into

play, but with decorum and Oriental gravity. The eldest baby kept an eye upon his juniors—or hers—and softly prattled advice, whilst the milk run down his dimpled chin. The small things were evidently breakfasting after their daily fashion. They looked neither to right nor left, but steadily pursued their business, with whiffing and babbling of their soft little mouths.

Beyond sat a fish merchant, his charcoal fire beside him, and a bubbling pot of oil upon it. An assistant neatly cleaned and cut the fins off a small thing like a sole, which, when ready, he placed in a basket. As customers approached, the master took these little fish, dipped them in a liquid paste, and plunged them into the boiling pot. Most delicious are his confections, for I have stopped and eaten them ere now. With the kindly gravity these people seem to show towards children, the fish merchant was serving a little girl, in trousers and jacket remarkably clean—a bright-eyed, saucy little creature, as white as an European.

On the low, flat roofs, which must be quite invisible when the trees come into leaf, women lolled and chattered. Those who showed but a glimpse of their features were old, or brown, or ugly, but I do not doubt that well-born Candaharis are white and handsome. I have had peeps enough at different times to assure me that the type is good. This town, like its rival, Shikarpore, is famous throughout Asia for the beauty and the levity of its women. But a Giaour Don Juan would think twice and again before seeking conquests here, or even answering the mysterious messengers who waylay him. A man would be no better than dead who left the main bazaar.

My observations were checked by a mounted officer, who strongly urged me as he passed to rejoin the column. A Sepoy had just been stabbed by the Cabul gate. Mr. Bellew is reported to have told his friends that a traveller who has not eyes in the back of his head is destined for an early grave in these regions. His remark applies not to Christians only, but to strangers of

any creed. A fine artistic taste for murder distinguishes the Candahari. Though the town be nothing if not orthodox, there is a great commerce in bad spirits, and the bhang shops are numerous.

In his amusing description of the Club des Hashasheens—if I remember the name correctly—Theophile Gautier gave a fanciful report of the effects of *Cannabis Indica* upon the European. My own experience is that it makes him sick. But the native of these parts is quite otherwise affected. Bhang makes him homicidal, blinds him to danger, stirs his religious feeling to the martyr's pitch, and rouses his patriotic hatred of the stranger. Upon Friday, in especial, the foreign visitor does well to keep indoors. Then the devout Mahometan attends public service, and excites himself with cries of "Allah hu!" The moolah preaches a burning sermon, and he leaves the mosque for the drug-shop, where his fanaticism boils to frenzy. Having reached murder-point, he sallies forth, dizzy, reeling, possessed of one idea alone—to kill. This city is not worse, however, than Peshawur has been and Quettah is. The same causes produce the same results, and firm, swift, unimpassioned justice will check the evil here as it has elsewhere.

Looking round, I saw I was alone in the dense mob of scoundrels. A long way up the street the tall camels might be seen crossing the roadway towards the Badurani gate, and I hastened to rejoin them. If possible, the ruins are more sordid, the filth lies deeper now than at the date of our arrival. In one small hollow, four camels are rotting, skinned, and mangled by dogs. The unhealthiness of Candahar is no marvel. To have one's nose cut off here is a torture with compensations.

Very glad we were to leave the reeking streets, to thread for the last time the black and squalid gateway, to pass under the lotty, crumbling walls, and to reach the open country. It begins to be green in patches. The spring crops are shooting, the sapless bushes coming into bud. In a few days each bit of moist earth

will be starred with narcissus thick as daisies. The camel thorns, so gnarled and ugly, are warming into colour. Crocuses, white and purple, dot the sand in lonely tufts. Rudimentary they are as flowers, a mere group of petals without form, but very quaint and pretty. They told truth who predicted that in the spring this country is no desert. Our grass-cutters, so long idle, once more find occupation, and in a few days the forage question will be settled.

We reached this place on the 25th, excellent travelling, but here we have stuck. The battery started with 170 camels, of which 31 are dead; the infantry have lost 44 out of 140. The remainder cannot carry the baggage, and how we are to reach Jacobabad is a problem over which our gallant colonel's hair is turning grey, and our gallant major's is being dragged out with frenzied fingers. Moreover, the battery horses have broken down with heavy work and irregular food. There is no *bhoosa* here, and little *gram*. It will seem incredible, but I speak with a knowledge of the fact, in saying that the horses of I-1 average close on fifteen years old; some are eighteen. It was loudly declared that no artillery horses would be sent on this campaign older than ten years; but, like so many fine resolutions, it was not carried out. To fill our sum of misery, rain fell yesterday, continued all night, and is still blowing in heavy gusts over the mountain. The 15th Hussars have caught us up;—whilst I write, their leading files are announced on the horizon. And, if I know Colonel Swinley, as I think I do, he will pass us to-morrow. An agreeable prospect! But I have just found an enterprising Parsee, and have bought his last bottle of brandy, his last box of cheroots. Patience therefore! There are those worse off!

At the foot of the Kojak Pass,
March 1.

This place seemed pretty enough when we reached it yesterday afternoon. Swinley's appearance on the horizon set us all in a

flutter, and somehow we contrived to creep up here, with a loss of twenty camels in three miles and a half. Two companies of the 26th N.I. crossed the defile, whilst the battery encamped at its foot, under escort of one company. Macleod and I might have done the same, like Fane, Sankey, Childers, and more of "the passengers," but we stopped below to shoot partridges. They called from rock to rock, whirled from our path, and ran amongst the stubble. We could not resist, and here we are, snowed up. Overnight the order was issued for marching at 6.30 a.m. Whilst the sky was still dark, the long *reveille* of the gunners' bugle, the bagpipe and tum-tum affected by the 26th N.I. aroused us ; but I was soon aware that something had gone wrong. The murmur of the waking camp dropped to silence, and presently I heard a sergeant cry, "Well, I shall go to my blessed bed again!" I threw off the rugs and carpets which protect me, and, in flannels and fur sleeping-boots, peeped through the tent door. The mountain sides, the glen, the tents were deep in snow. Grey and silvery the gnarled pistaccio-trees stood out against that background. A shrouded sky hung close overhead, vanishing in a dusky fog which lay and rolled along the crags. More hopeless prospect one could not see, but a picture superb after the style of Munthe. Bitter cold sent every one to bed again, when those unfortunates responsible for our march held anxious commune with themselves.

Until nine o'clock there was scarcely a sound, besides the feeble twitter of some hungry partridge, and a hoarse cawing of the ravens which flapped from height to height. The querulous screaming of our followers was hushed. They lay in torpor, beyond helping themselves, miserable as words could not describe. But one cannot stop in bed all day, the more especially if one's servants insist on doing so. Besides, we were all anxious for a consultation. To go on was impossible ; to stop, starvation ; to return, abhorrent. In the end, Major Lewes sent back his camels to Chaman, where, at least, they would starve in

company, out of our sight. After this, we could only wait, and dreary business that was, "sloshing" round in snow knee-deep, or shivering and grumbling in the tents. As the day wore on, the gunners, desperate, made amusement for themselves. One heard them laughing and shouting on the hill sides, invisible in the mist. Then upon every side the clang of axe, the crash of falling tree, the cheers, and the measured cry of men hauling in unison, told what sport they had found. Whole trunks of "pistas" came tumbling and sliding down the cliffs. No monarch of the forest is the pistaccio. Its trunk is dwarfed and weirdly, its boughs seem to writhe like wounded snakes. But the ugliest of trees is welcome to us, who in three months' campaigning have scarce beheld four boles together, and we mourned for the pistas whilst we burnt them. The cheeriness of those gunners, and the helplessness even of our Sikhs, showed how injudicious was the government in forbidding officers to take their "batmen" on campaign. But, lord! as Mr. Pepys observes, if I set myself to number the caprices of the Military Department, I should be frozen before I finished.

Abdullah-khan-ka-killah,

March 4.

Though I wrote with my boots steaming above a charcoal fire, which smouldered in a hole beneath my table, the increasing cold brought me to a standstill when I had gone thus far on March 1st. All that day and the next snow drifted down, with breaks of deluding promise. In one of them, of a sudden, we heard a cheery chorus, far overhead, where the roadway wound upwards among clouds and mist. The singers were invisible, and men ran to their arms, for an attack was not possible alone, but likely. They proved, however, to be a party of Pathan labourers whom Captain Campbell had sent down from his eerie to see if they could clear the pass. They set to work, but a blinding rush of snow descended in ten minutes, and the martial chant arose again, dwelling on the ear in long-drawn notes which swelled

and sank, more and more faintly, as the mountaineers withdrew, higher and higher up the crags.

There are a large number of Pathans, two companies, in the 26th N.I., as in all Punjab regiments. They have their national bagpipe and tambour. The Sikhs ignore them, and they do not recognize the Sikhs' existence. Quarrels are rare, but men of twenty years' service profess not to know one another. These fellows are vastly stimulated by the situation. After snow-balling each other and their officers, they sent a deputation to the colonel, asking leave to make a match with the 15th Hussars down at Chaman. It was good-temperedly refused, of course, and the Pathans avenged themselves by building whole trunks of pistas into a bonfire. A fine row that would have been, but, giants as these Pathans are, I would have backed the solid veterans of Col. Swinley. His officers set a good example of toughness. Major Luck and a number of subalterns strolled into our camp to-day, and went on to the crest of the defile, returning fresh and rosy.

On the morning of the 3rd, a thaw set in more rapid than northerners could believe, and by mid-day the path was a river. Captain Campbell hurried down to Chaman, guessing that the Hussars would push by us, if not stopped. With difficulty their stout old colonel was persuaded to halt one day longer, and by desperate efforts we drove the guns across, late in the afternoon. That such a feat should be even possible is a proof how excellent is the road built by Lieutenant Wells, R.E. It is indeed one of the most admirable bits of engineering I have seen. After taking the guns across, and leaving them under guard of the sepoys, horses and men returned to camp. If it had snowed once more in the night, Major Lewes would have been in a position rather absurd—with his guns on one side a hill, his men and horses on the other. After all, the 15th Hussars went on first next day, though starting from Chaman. I have just watched this gallant regiment march in, every officer, and every man but three, afoot, leading his horse, which is loaded with "kit."

Colonel Swinley may well be proud of his gallant fellows. Seventeen miles over the Kojak Amram is a grand march for dismounted Hussars. Any one who chose might ride, but three invalids only gave out. How many regiments have we now who could perform such a feat !

Dadur, *March 17.*

At Derwazu, on Thursday night, five of our followers had been found frozen to death when I left camp, and twenty-one were missing ; here, on Monday, we cease travelling at nine a.m. for fear of sunstroke. Seldom has an army experienced such sudden changes of temperature, but the men are healthy on the whole. It was fearful travelling from Abdallah-khan-ku-killah to Quetta. Tents, kit, everything, was wet through, day after day. But the snow and rain has cooled the Kuchi desert, and our Brahui friends are only now undertaking the annual migration which should have been finished three weeks ago. These people pass their summer in the mountains and their winter on the plains. Many strange sights I have beheld, but none more interesting than the Brahui migration. The Bolan Pass is blocked with camels, cattle, horses, sheep, dogs, and human beings. I roughly estimated that we met five thousand of the latter, and twenty-five thousand of the former every day. Amidst the dense crowd, slowly plodding one way or other, the camels engaged on commissariat service went their way. Alla-ood-dina Khan, the great chief of the Brahuīs, has taken the contract on this line ; had he not done so, Heaven knows where we should have been. Our transport system has collapsed, and the superior officers of the department are acrimoniously disputing whose the blame. General Stewart has not waited the result. Dismissing three colonels, Sibley, Brander, and Lane, he puts his trust in Captain Hobday, who thinks system is a means, not a blessed end. Still, I blame the combatant authorities at Simla for the catastrophe, rather than the heads of the department or the executive. Had I space here, I could give papers which display a thorough

intelligence of the situation on the part of Colonel Wills, and a reckless disregard of warnings on the part of government.

Alla-ood-dina Khan fought against us in the last war, and he, it is said, pistolled Mrs. Marsh with his own hand. He took her for a man, of course; woman is sacred to Brahui and Pathan. A huge and bristling ruffian is he, roughly good-natured, a mixture of cunning and devilry. He has carried over two thousand tons of stores already, with the loss of six hundredweight or so, and this is doubtless a mistake of reckoning. His vassals go where and how they like, without interference from anybody; in fact, the chief's sole stipulation was that no commissariat agent should have power to meddle with his arrangements.

The Brahuīs are not a handsome race, though perfect masculine beauty may be found amongst them. Rahim Khan, our guide, nephew of the supreme chief, is handsome as a Greek statue; but he has few rivals. Some of the women have fine eyes, but the majority are squat of figure and broad of face. In physique neither men nor women approach the Eastern Pathans, though the former are tall and powerful by an European standard. In the migration one sees the race as at no other time. The women have their veils indeed, but they scarcely use them, unless of high family. This is the season for match-making. Girls employed in driving cattle amongst strange herds innumerable, cannot be expected to veil themselves completely, and so love is born. The family of a chief is mounted on camels, each damsel wedged in with carpets and household gear. Very fine and tasteful are the trappings of the beast which carries a lady of distinction. On its neck hangs a foot-wide collar, edged with a fringe of bobbins and cowrie-shells. A like furniture is attached to housings which drop half way to the ground, and the effect is singularly happy. The wives of a poorer class ride on donkeys, facing the tail, and the lowest of all go afoot. I saw no family which did not possess pack-oxen or beasts of burden. The number of sheep and goats was astonishing. Every woman,

except the richest, carried a basket of lambs or kids, or a baby camel with a long neck like an ostrich. Some sat, as it were, in a nest of pretty little creatures, all tied to the saddle, and bleating and baaing each in its own tongue.

The famous Bolan Pass is giving up its secrets one by one. General Phayre is always in the saddle, always asking, comparing, measuring. He thinks it no feat to ride from Derwazu to Dadur, seventy or eighty miles, and his activity is rewarded. The pass by which Alexander marched, and numberless conquerors before and after him, has hitherto been accepted religiously as the only possible road to India from this side; excepting the Mular defile, which is even more disagreeable. Phayre has changed all that, and Alla-ood-dina has pronounced the requiem of the Bolan. "Ho gya!" he says; "it's all up!" Since his ancestors arrived here from Ulip and Damas (Aleppo and Damascus, the original seat of the Brahui race) they have lived on the Bolan. I showed my Candahari carpets to Rahim Khan yesterday. "I have one like that," said the mild-speaking young Adonis, as he pointed to the most superb. "It was my first 'loot'; I took it in the pass." "And the merchants?" "We killed them!" he answered, with a pearly smile.

General Phayre has just told me how he made his greatest discovery. After dining with Macleod and myself at Derwazu, he started before daybreak for Mach, half way down the pass. Arriving there in good time, he thought it would be a pleasant ride to Dadur, and set forward, with Ya Mohammad for his sole attendant. This is the eldest son of Alla-ood-dina, future chief of the Brahuīs, a desperate fighting-man, some of whose gallant deeds in our service I should like to tell, had I the space. His family were staying at Dadur, and he had lately married a new wife. Blithely rode the general and the Brahui, until they reached the first crossing of the Bolan river. The tremendous rains which had kept us wet through on the march to Quetta, had swollen this stream. No means of passing it, and the general

decided to return. Ya Mohammad hesitated, then told an ancestral secret. Leading Phayre by paths to him known, he left the river bed entirely, crossed the cliffs to eastward, and reached Dadur without again seeing the Bolan. Next day the general was out by dawn, exploring, and on the morrow his pioneers had begun their work on this new road, called the Maskarf. Unsatisfied still, Phayre searched and climbed until he found the continuation of this same ravine beyond Mach, and rode into the plain of Quetta. It was then that Alla-ood-dina cried, "Ho gya!" The saving of distance alone is enormous, and all the twenty-three fordings of the Bolan stream are avoided save one.

Jacobabad.

General Phayre has shortened by twenty miles our march across the Kuchi desert. But the stages are longer, and, if possible, more dreary than those of our former route. The whole country from Dadur to Shikarpur is a Sahara, in which settlements are only found upon the banks of the unfrequent streams which gradually vanish in the sand as they flow. Where they have still volume sufficient to irrigate the waste, it becomes marvellously fertile, and the day is not far off when all this desert will be exporting corn. But half a century ago, Jacobabad was a miserable hamlet round a well. In a few days or weeks the grand feat of Jacob will be repeated, for a canal is being cut between Barshori and Nahalkagote. Truly we deserve to hold this country, if there be salvation in "works."

In this desert, hotter than the wilds of Egypt, one must march at night, though the season be so early and so favourable. This is the home of that strange wind called the Bad-i-Simoon, the "blast of death." Incredulous persons would not believe in this awful visitation until it destroyed four *sowars* of the Scinde Horse, and then, as a final testimony, swept across Jacobabad. Very curious is the account of a gentleman who was sleeping on his housetop, as the necessary custom rules here. He was awakened

by an indescribable pain and thirst, as if all the juices of his body were dried up. Starting from bed, he tumbled somehow downstairs, aided by a wind whose breath was choking, and threw himself into a bath. There he lay for half an hour. Next morning the course of the Bad-i-Simoon could be traced in blackened foliage and scorched crops to the edge of the desert. Its width was only three hundred yards or so.

It is dull and heavy work, this night travelling, somewhat picturesque, perhaps, but the picturesque does not strike a man when regarded from the objective point of view. Ahead of us strides a torch-bearer, whose loose robes and bare, uplifted arm swing luridly as he whirls his knot of rushes. Our escort of wild Brahuis are muffled in flowing garments, and their skittish mares shy and jib from side to side. We follow, half asleep, in stained and ragged costume. Our servants plod behind, passing the bubble-bubble all aglow. From a distance, the cavalcade must look weirdly enough on that smooth plain of sand, but those who are "in it" do not feel the poetry. They are too tired and sleepy, too conscious that the precious steeds which have carried them a thousand miles and more, are dropping with fatigue. Mighty little is there to see in the Kuchi waste, but a man likes to feel the full possession of his eyesight, though it be useless. Stumbling, dozing, listless, one toils along, and the baggage-waggon screams and crawls in rear. From time to time, with scarcely a warning, we find ourselves enveloped by camels. Noiselessly they tread upon the sand, guided by barefoot Scindis, so swathed about the head as to hear nothing less uproarious than artillery. But this is the last stage. At Shikarpur begin the avenues which Jacob planted, the smooth highways he made, the fields he rescued from the desert; and in Jacobabad, his pretty capital, the long march from Candahar may be said to finish.

AFTER THE STORM.

IN July, unless one can reach the mountains or some unfrequented shore, a man might as well spend his holidays in the park as anywhere, and call it doing his bake at home. I rather wish I had followed that course. Everybody says there are lovely nooks familiar to the enterprising guardsman and the aboriginal nurse. I could imagine days of bliss under a tree in Kensington Gardens, and nights of rapture beside the deodorized Serpentine. Incident? Adventure? Why, each hour should bring you more of them than lurk betwixt Calais and the Caucasus. This holiday journeying comes too late or too early in the year. To walk is very travail, to row or ride a torment, to fish a burdensome futility. For the latter purpose am I trailing a twelve-foot pole beside a crystal brook, but the trout themselves show me wisdom. See how they lie and dose between long swathes of weed that fan them softly. I also will lay me down beneath this elm, and compose my mind to harmony with the season.

May and June are months for leaping, sporting, and high jinks; July should bring us rest. Formerly we met, the trout and I, on equal terms, and each scored his triumph. It was in the short and eager Russian springtide. The woods of ill-grown birch and stunted pine were carpeted with lily of the valley, wild azalea of delicious scent, perfumed menyanthes, great yellow orchids, and beautiful tiny arum. The river banks, the glades, were sheeted with bright flowers unknown to me, though vaguely recollected in

"grey old gardens" furnished for another age. No lying under trees then, albeit the moss made a fragrant bed, six inches in springy depth. Trout and man were all alive; and is not my name also written on the walls of that hospitable chalet at Zareitchic, where many a deed of venery most notable is briefly scored—slaughter of bears and lynxes, wolves and wild cats, capercaillie and giant fish. Worthy of remark it seemed, perusing the catalogue, that every great feat save one, was ascribed to an English name, though the seigneurs have friends beyond counting.

But there are fine sportsmen in Russia whom I am proud to know. In truth it is a delightful people, for the usual commerce of life, kind-hearted, merry, feather-headed as a Jamaica "creole." I know their evil qualities well enough; I detest their "politics and knavish tricks" with a fervour justified by peculiar knowledge; but the people, poor wretches, are mighty blameless for the latter. Like anybody else, I have had my little difficulty with the Russian Government. A Grand Duke said his say about me before Europe; and I have replied with such force as Heaven granted me. How did they behave when I "bearded the lion in his den," as an alarmed diplomat put the case on my arrival at St. Petersburg? Why, excellently! I met H.I.H. face to face on the Grand Morskaïa that night of the Shah's reception. We had last seen one another at Gorny Studen, as his Highness went to sing *Te Deum*, or its Greek equivalent, for Skobeleff's victory at Lovcha. Then he stopped and shook me by the hand, and in the lightness of his heart made many jests. Afterwards events took place which gave our meeting in the street a peculiar embarrassment. With great courtesy and presence of mind his Highness was good enough to turn his august back, and stare into a shop window whilst I hastened past. Seriously, it was an awkward moment, and the Grand Duke's conduct showed, I declare, a very gentlemanly instinct.

One may indulge vulgar sneers about baking at home; but, in truth, it is as near the antique Elysium as mortals may hope to

win—this lying supine beneath the shade in hot July, recalling memories. The Kentish stubble field has richer colour far than Russian woods, though shape, and tone, and perfume of its flowers be less delicate. Splashes and specks of scarlet, bands of yellow, streams of blue, sheets of mauve, are nature's pattern here, set for our study on a dead-leaf ground. The fields slope to a glassy river, alternate with meadows emerald and golden corn. Great elms, in lines and groups, pencil out the land. No speck of sky glimmers through their heavy head of foliage. It hangs deep and ponderous in the still air, with shadows blue and misty.

What pains Mr. Ruskin took years ago—"when love and all the world was young," alas!—to convince the English public that the shadow of leaves is not green! Was it needful? The truth has been visible to all men's eyes since trees first sprang to maze our senses with a beauty not to be defined. But those belong to the elect who through long life perceive one fact not recorded in their great grandfathers' commonplace book. Our ancestors from all time knew the beauty of Kent. On such a scene—nay, on this very one, perchance—Alexander Iden had been gazing when he exclaimed,—

"Oh, who would live turmoyled in the Court,
And might enjoy such pleasant walks as these?"

A charming sentiment, expressed with grace. It grieves one to observe that, when Iden is knighted and attached to the king, no later than the following act, his pretty rustic tastes seem all forgotten, and he rejoiceth to live turmoyled. Shakespeare's sarcasm is mere nature always. It is a question as old as Courts in what life man finds his maximum of happiness; but the answer is as old, if it be rightly studied. Change is the secret of felicity, and Iden, who must soon have fled for life from conquering York—unless he learned the courtier's tricks with unnatural precocity—enjoyed his Kentish nest the more after a brief sojourn with town rats.

Many old-fashioned classes have abundance of recruits, lissome and curled, ready to fill up their ranks, but the courtier of former days, where he still lingers, is a man who has outlived his master. Kings and emperors of this generation know too much. I think the true race survives only in Russia and Austria, where also it is mostly doddering and futile.

Prince Gortschakoff is the grand exception. A wonderful old man! It is bad taste to draw too near the life. His Serene Highness is not a Cromwell, nor are his warts upon the skin. But the opinion may be hazarded that such manners and morals as Prince Gortschakoff clings to can be found nowhere except in Russia at the present day. His Highness would have been vastly more at home in the Vienna Congress, this typical Muscovite of the old school, than at the Congress of Berlin. There is a charming proverb of his country which recalls that "Business is not a bear; it won't run away to the woods." The men of Prince Gortschakoff's day had thoroughly tamed their "business," so that it followed them to the most incongruous places, never left them, and never troubled them. They transacted affairs, as Anacreon professed to write songs, between a woman and a wine-cup.

I wonder, by-the-bye, what has become of the Bucharest favourite, Rachel. She had talent, besides beauty and fascination. If she blabbed secrets of State, the fault lay with those who talked of them before a little actress; to send across the frontier between gendarmes a girl against whom no charge was made, revealed the Tartar.

What a contrast on either hand are the two younger rivals of the Chancellor! Is there any one who personally likes General Ignatieff, unless, maybe, his pleasant secretary, Prince Tzerteleff? By-the-bye, that gallant volunteer has five separate Crosses of St. George pendant upon his chest for deeds of excelling valour, besides others, I know not what; there is no mistake about the number, for I counted them betwixt finger and thumb. The

Prince has quitted his General, taking up military duties in earnest. Conceive the deeds of valour which should earn for a man five Victoria Crosses ! In all our army there is but one man who has been recommended for a couple. Where was it I met that gallant old major ? Oh, at Suffed Sang, on the way to Cabul.

Ignatieff is even more familiar than Prince Gortschakoff, for the latter, even in frankest moments, throws his jests *de haut en bas*. The excellent General was true to his policy until the last. When the Salisbury-Schouvaloff Memorandum appeared, he cried out to a friend of mine, "There ! you see what a fuss they made against my Treaty ! and there is not a clause in it which cannot be reconciled with the wishes of everybody." I know not whether it was this amazing piece of—casuistry, let us say !—which stirred the Emperor to wrath, or whether it was a joke almost better, attributed to his Excellence ; but next day the vagrant General returned to Kief "for his health." This other jest related to a strike, threatened by the artisans of the Bank press. They pleaded for an advance of twenty-five kopeks silver—say a shilling—on the ground that their tale of paper roubles had been increased by 100,000 a day, requiring extra work. The application was refused, as an unbearable extortion of forty roubles *per diem*. But the authorities good-naturedly offered to let the men name their own price in paper, a proposal which they scorned. Familiarity breeds contempt, and these fellows knew better than most what the paper rouble was coming to. This was one of Ignatieff's amusing stories. Verily, Russia is a strange country.

Nothing is sacred to the wits of St. Petersburg, especially the Bank, the "Generals," and the Administration generally. I remember inviting a tradesman, who had been most polite, to dine on an evening which, as it afterwards occurred to me, had been dedicated to the entertainment of a most distinguished and delightful General home on sick leave. In great alarm I asked a friend's advice. "Oh," he replied, "there are many foreign tradesmen here who would refuse to dine with 'an Excellency,'

but never 'an Excellency' who would be insulted at meeting a foreign tradesman, until he had asked a loan and been refused ! ”

I suppose that the enemies of Count Schouvaloff are ten times as many in high places, and ten times as bitter as those of General Ignatieff. Whilst the former served as chief of the Third Section of Gendarmerie—of the secret police, that is—he trampled on many corns, and disappointed many ambitions. He was in office during the Polish insurrection, and his task was awfully grave. Opinion about his conduct at that crisis appears to be balanced betwixt good and evil report, but upon inquiry I found none of those who applaud or denounce able to speak with real knowledge of the facts. I believe that Count Schouvaloff tried to do what he held to be his duty with as much kindness as possible.

I do not think there could be a face or a manner more winning than his Excellency's. He also is frank of speech, familiar in small gestures, but a style differing alike from the Chancellor's and the General's. His port, his language, are emphatically those of a modern gentleman ; his keen eyes always laugh—no, not always ! At my last visit in Berlin he was no better than a ghost of the handsome seigneur I had quitted at St. Petersburg.

That was a small adventure, by-the-bye. I was shown into a room to wait. Secretaries came and went with papers. It was dull staring at the British Embassy across the way, where their lordships were not yet visible. I looked around for diversion, and saw nothing but a large map, folded, on the table. Turning it over, I took out a mass of printed papers, and laid them aside without a glance, then plunged into the hourly, endless study of Berlin—a large chart of Bulgaria. The door opened at my back, and Count Schouvaloff advanced, unheard over the thick carpet. I turned with a start, and he held out his hand. My movement showed the map, and the papers lying beside. The sudden change of face, the snatch at those sheets despised, told me, when too late, that I had overlooked secrets of the gravest sort. With-

out more words, the Count hurried off with his prey, and presently I was summoned. He looked ill almost to the death, wax-white ; his eyes red and swollen for lack of sleep ; his manner spiritless. I could not but remark the pill-boxes and draughts upon each article of furniture about the room—as a hospitable man might place fruit and cooling drinks for visitors to help themselves. Possibly there was some make-believe about the illness—it is the fairest weapon of the diplomat—but those who know how gallantly Count Schouvaloff struggled for his Emperor must be sure that his anxieties were almost too great to bear.

Thought of those awful labours fills me with ineffable admiration and pity. Here is a man—nay, several men—most intelligent, amiable, and accomplished, who might lie under a tree the whole sweet summer through, with slaves, or beings equivalent, to bring them iced drink in golden tankards—instead of which, to quote the immortal Justice, they go and work themselves ill over treaties in hot, mal-odorous Berlin. Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet than toil. I will recollect no more, but turn my face to the scented earth, and dream away my holiday.

II.

BEFORE the ivied inn which is my holiday dwelling, stands a church, time-stained and overgrown, the shade of which I seek to read my paper of a morning. Ancient brasses are set amidst the tiles which decorate its floor : they beg a heedless visitor to pray for souls long past beyond the power of his orisons. Swinburne's verses come to the mind :—

“ Thine eyes' strong weeping shall not profit,
Thy laughter shall not give them ease.”

In a corner may be traced the outline of a little window set askew, long since walled up. Through it lepers and unholy persons, forbid to mix with the elect, might see the elevation of the host, and save their wretched souls. What a foul crowd must have gathered on this turf, of bright Sunday mornings long ago ;

dumb clods for whom this majestic earth, this brave o'erhanging firmament, was no other than the vestibule of hell !

Who were those beings, so many in England as to need special provisions in the building of a church, and yet more common abroad ? Leper is a word of many meanings. In Mexico I found it to signify elephantiasis ; at the Far East, boils and blains of hideous virulency ; at the Cape, an awful rotting of the limbs. Nowhere have I myself beheld the scaled leprosy described in Scripture. But who were the hereditary outcasts ? Not, as some have ingeniously fancied, the offspring of Moorish slaves ; for the Cagots of France who keep pure the unhallowed blood, are whiter than their neighbours, and show no trace of oriental ancestry. Were they Slaves, Slaves, the hewers of wood, the Calibans of Europe ?—the people of vices so infamous, of character so degraded, that their names, generic and tribal, have furnished two words of shame to every civilized tongue ?

Orate pro animâ ! Is this a time to pray for one individual soul, whilst the eastern air rots and reeks with blood ? If all this rolling landscape were set with graves far as the eye can see, and thick as minnows in the stream, it would not hold the bodies of men slain within the year (1878). There have been wars necessary, wars justifiable, wars glorious, fought by man the image of God against man the image of the beast. Where was the side of Heaven in this strife ? Never since humanity began to show its meanest part, were tales recorded so revolting as the history of Slavism triumphant—of Servia. Murder, lust, treachery, and swindling, sordid and dull brutality, are the records of the Obrenovitch. Read them, if your stomach be strong to bear a plethora of mean horrors ; and pray for the living, if forbidden supplications for the dead. May the upshot of this Bosnian struggle be the suppression of Servia, its prince, ministers, army, and all the hideous burlesque. For the people, oppressed and overridden, forced to adventures for which they have neither heart nor spirit, Austrian rule would be a blest relief.

So small is my churchyard that big chestnut-trees on either side almost join hands across it, but grass springs lusty over the dead of a thousand years. One big monument there is, a square tablet on four squat columns, of Queen Anne's day. It seems built to match the pury corpses laid beneath. The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep under head-boards scarcely legible ten years after erection. A snowy cross, wreathed with flowers, tells that the modern *cultus* of the dead has made its way to this lonely spot, where the villagers eye it dubiously. The decoration of graves is no new thing, however. Allusions constantly turn up in our literature, until Pope's day. Puritans did not suppress it; and their views were long in gaining hold upon the nation, in this as in other matters. I prefer to think that the practice dropped when England began to send her sons afield for the conquest of the world. Death was then no theme for sentimental regret, for flowers, or verses other than martial. Too many households mourned for those who lay in graves unknown, cut off on duty obscure, fulfilling destinies themselves did not understand. In that grim vault yonder should repose a youth, the heir of broad lands round, but deprived of his very tomb. I stood by when they laid him under palm-trees and tall feathery ferns, whilst the guns of the retreating foe rolled sullenly away before us. . . . A churchyard is a fitting place to meditate on late events and present personages. Ambition has its goal here—or its Golgotha, to which human lives are tossed. It was a fine game anciently, one still studied and applauded in the schools. The conquerors and the statesmen of old time appear as grand abstractions, awful embodiments of fate, whose doings we may be taught to abhor, but must not despise. So, in a lesser way, we keep a glimmering of sentimental respect for Turpin and his crew. They do not seem wholly the same sort of being as our modern ruffian, whose ill-favoured photograph is posted at Scotland Yard, and whose dirty deeds are chronicled in the police news. But the "fierce light" of which we hear so much, has beaten out the divinity which once

hedged a hero. We know the Emperor of Austria for a grave, dull man, though it may be that he is quite as romantic, quite as grand a figure, as the most famous of his ancestors, with whom ours were not so well acquainted. No photographs showed their unroyal features, no special correspondents presumed to laugh or criticize. What fate would have been his who described the German Cæsar for "a red-haired man, with a surprised expression," as some irreverent journalist lately wrote of Francis Joseph? The Counts Andrassy had rights of high and low justice, which would have been exercised with the utmost rigour, if the heavens had not dropped, when the heir of that mighty house, and an imperial minister, was called a supple intrigant, fond of a crimson coat as Oliver Goldsmith, and most like Samson perhaps in the matter of hair. We may laugh nowadays at a high and puissant grandson of a pig-driver, like Milan; we may openly shiver at the clammy touch of Ristic's hand. Of the great Czar himself I could dare tell stories true as piquant, were I not restrained by pity for that melancholy sovereign. The empire of Germany alone is safe from personal ridicule. It is, as Prussia has always been, a state outside comparison with others. Of Bismarck one can only say, as Balzac said of Napoleon in his "*Peau de Chagrin*," "*C'est un grand homme ! N'en parlons plus !*"

I remember well that night, towards the end of the Congress, when the almighty minister called upon Lord Beaconsfield. It was near eleven p.m., and his lordship, suffering from bronchitis, was just going to bed. The great Prince is now a bird of night, rising late in the afternoon, and working till dawn. The Congress much disturbed his habits; and it is creditable that he struggled so hard against the irritability which this change occasioned. Lord Beaconsfield had been expecting the visit, but at no such hour. What passed I cannot tell; nor would if I knew, seeing that the conversation was familiar and personal. But Berlin is a late city, and the news soon spread that Bismarck was visiting at the Kaiserhof. A crowd assembled round the door, and persons who

could make a claim to enter thronged the hall. After a time Prince Bismarck emerged, and the two English detectives in attendance on Lord Beaconsfield, with the two German police who wait upon his highness, accompanied him to the stair-head. Perceiving the number of people below, Prince Bismarck stopped suddenly, and cried with anger, "Who are these? What does this mean?" The little landlord of the Kaiserhof explained with trembling that they were curious individuals, assembled to see the great minister. He, the great minister, looked down and glanced around; then, observing that the crowd were watching him with surprise, he grimly laughed, and strode down the stairs. Taller by a head than those who stood beside his path, his heavy eyes deep-shaded by the helmet, and his mouth set firm beneath the ponderous moustache, he went through the midst to his carriage, three feet before his anxious satellites. The proud gait seemed fine to those who had watched that start and tremor on the landing. If another Nobiling had stood among us, Bismarck was prepared to face him unarmed and alone, if so it must be. Each of us could bear that ordeal once or twice or thrice; but he goes through it daily, with nerves all ajar, and throbbing from disease. I am not sure that the Prince is a wise statesman; but I am quite certain that he is a great man. No bones of a German soldier have manured fields contested for mere lust of earth, to give "a backing" to a sterile province.

III.

SINCE I wrote those lines above, it has been granted me once more to see the Eastern world—a boon which I, unworthy, had not dared to ask. It has been granted me also to return, and sit beneath the chestnut-tree which is ever the goal of my wanderings. A musical verse from "Locksley Hall" lilts in my brain as I stroll over the perfumed meadow towards it. How many times more shall I dream in this shade "after the storm"? I found the spot after the *année terrible*; I sought it returning from South

Africa, from the Gold Coast, from Servia, from Bulgaria ; and now it welcomes me from Afghanistan. Always the same in its green robe of foliage, it softly disregards the change in man. The well-worn moral thrills me to "the depths of some divine despair," as I sit alone now to muse.

A pleasure sharp of taste it was, yet saddening, to revisit the East. Where, fifteen years ago, I had so keenly felt the joy of life, came the first warning of old age. The grey hair was accepted, I trust, with no unseemly struggle. For old as for young, there is delight in Egypt. To believe French merchants and financiers, one would think that there was no more corn in the land of Joseph, no more feasting, no more laughter, no sound but a wail of bankruptcy and the cry of oppressed and starving fellahs. They regret the festive time when M. Bravet, the Nabab of Daudet's novel, could sell a mirror at 1600 per cent. profit, and buy forgiveness with a broad jest. The Englishman who revisits this country after fifteen years does not perceive the signs of ruin. For honest traders and steady men Egypt appears to be much what it was—no land of Goschen, nor a desert where the manna falls from above; but a fertile territory, in which modest fortunes are to be gathered by hard work.

Alexandria has grown and beautified herself. The European quarter spreads and becomes more ornate, though El Ramleh, the "desert suburb," is now green with gardens and white with country houses. Even narrow streets are paved with large square blocks of stone, well suited for the dry climate. Such an abundance of cabs is seen, that the stout old gentleman in spectacles and umbrella, gravely perched upon a little donkey, is almost laughed at now. The donkey-boys who used to lord it in the streets are humbler of tone as they get fewer in number. Not once did I hear their screaming pæan, "Rigluk, oh sheik!—Shumalek!" Cavasses still run before the vehicles of the great, long whip in hand, gleaming gay as butterflies, but voiceless, like Byron's gondolier. So far, in fact, as government and police

rules can influence a population, that of Alexandria is being civilized after the European mode. But the real people escape. It seemed to me that more women are veiled, and that more closely, than formerly. A less number of natives, I think, wear European clothes. The untidiness of houses inside, the dilapidation of courtyards, the carelessness of gardeners, have increased. And there is quite as much to please the eye, to stir the soul with laughter, as this Egyptian port could ever show.

It would be supposed that the "Capitainerie" and the Custom-house of Alexandria must at least be European in their arrangements, wherever Eastern obstinacy found refuge. But the fact is not so. Instantly on landing one feels oneself in the "changeless Orient." Those officers and officials sitting in the archway of the "Capitainerie" have disguised themselves in coats and trousers, but they have not changed their soul. Nowhere in Europe would all the staff of the Custom-house be drinking coffee in the doorway at this hour of the morning, smoking cigarettes and long pipes; nowhere would they thus refresh themselves in company with "outsiders" of every sort—merchants in silk and turban, barefooted porters, and odd men of the establishment, all grouped together, and all taking part in the slow, grave council about nothing.

At the further entrance to the dingy building one falls prone, so to speak, into the Oriental slough. A swarm of brigands, equally dirty and picturesque, seize hold upon one's baggage, and commence a Homeric fight around it. Pushing the vociferous crew in front, one tries to make his way, and at length from out the surging mass a stalwart fellow emerges, holding one's bag clasped tightly to his chest, and running with it as a boy "runs in" at football. Seated in the cab, whilst the driver threads his way at foot's pace, a gentleman comes up and softly murmurs "Back-sheesh." He is fair, well-dressed, clean shaven, and he smokes a cigarette. One would fain stop and ask this personage upon what ground he claims our money; what he has done for us or for

humanity ; whether he is an Egyptian bondholder, or some humble friend with a good memory who recollects us from former days ? But the driver has cleared a passage with his screams, and off we go, leaving our gentleman to grumble at our meanness.

It must be very convenient to wear a night-gown all day, with a clean one for "dress." There is no need to dwell upon the economy of time and money which would be made if this Egyptian custom were generally adopted. So much is evident ; but there are considerations of a higher nature. That feeling of independence which lies at the root of manly virtue must be fostered by the practice. A man whose costume is the night-gown, plain and simple, must feel himself prepared for any fate. He will go from court to camp, and thence to "grove"—whatever that means, or wherever it be, he cares not—properly accoutred. No anxiety distracts him. He need not take counsel with his friends, or seek books of etiquette, to learn what is "correct," say, for presentation at Court, or attendance at five o'clock tea, or at a wedding, or a funeral. Whatever charge is laid upon him he can give his whole mind to it, undisturbed by petty cares of dress. Say that he is ordered off to India at a few hours' notice ; his preparations are completed when he has bought a dozen night-gowns. Suppose he is called up at night ; he rises from his bed in full array, equally prepared to meet his Sovereign, to command an army, to drive away the cats, to perform a surgical operation, to thank a party of serenaders, or to lead the mazy dance. This knowledge must give a man an enviable consciousness of dignity, besides starting him in life with an advantage of one hour per day at least above his fellow-creatures who dress and undress. It may be urged that those who flaunt their night-gowns in the sun, to put the operation in poetic phrase, do not conspicuously show off these advantages. But the East has rules of its own. Depend on it, your night-gown is the only wear for the philosopher.

There must be huge delight in Egypt for those who love flowers ; everything will grow and flourish, even pine-trees if shaded—

everything but grass. This painful deficiency is supplied by various sorts of clover, which make a tolerable substitute. The quantity of flowers in autumn is astonishing—flowers brought from every land, and thriving better than at home. Under the camellia-trees lies an inch-thick carpet of buds, stripped ruthlessly from the overladden branches. A German gardener explained to us that for six months he tends the grateful soil, and for six months keeps shop—a curious system, which he has pursued for years with profit and pleasure alternately. Enthusiastic botanist though he be, the local spirit has overpowered his severity. A man lay fast asleep in the sun, with two or three weeds in a basket beside him, and a knife dropped from his open hand. We turned aside to pass, and the gardener did not heed him. At another place some half-dozen men and boys lay on their stomachs gossiping languidly. “These fellows,” says our guide, without a tone of sarcasm or irony, “are preparing a bed for *gardinias*, which will not thrive in our dry soil.” Without this assurance one would have supposed they were idling themselves to sleep.

What humour there is in the Egyptian railway! Our train starts twenty minutes behind time. Through the consideration of the Peninsular and Oriental Company, each passenger is furnished with a table of distances, and a list of stations, with the time allowed at each. This is gratefully received, and we study it with an interest which transforms itself by slow degrees into blank and alarmed perplexity. Such strange travelling was never seen in Europe. The distance between Alexandria and Damanhoor, we learn, is sixty-four miles, which we cover in one hour twenty-eight minutes—a pace to match the Flying Dutchman. The next station, Teh-el-Barood, is sixteen miles away, and we gain it in thirty-six minutes—speed reduced fifty per cent.; our train is taking breath. After this rest the run surpasses everything, for Zafr-Zayat lies forty miles away, and we reach it in eighteen minutes—a rate of one hundred and thirty miles an hour or so. After such a burst as that it is no wonder, though a little dis-

appointing, that the next four miles should not be covered in less than twenty-five minutes. There are facts more curious still in the long list; but when we come to Maksama, and find that in thirty-two minutes' travel we have actually made no miles at all, but a trifling advance of fourteen chains from Tel-el-Kebir, the most trusting amongst us refuses more faith in that time card. It bears, indeed, the respected signature of Mr. J. C. Chapman, and is endorsed by the Peninsular and Oriental Company; but the date betrays it, "April 1, 1878." An excellent jest in truth, but is it not a little worn in October? The Peninsular and Oriental Company has a large staff in Egypt. By combining their resources of humour, they might surely invent a new joke in six months. If this be asking too much, they might nominate a committee of their best and wisest to correct the proof-sheets of a new time-table.

Curious travelling it is, through the Nile delta at first, then through the desert. At this season the river is near its highest, and we skirt long pools of flood, cross streams and canals beyond enumeration. Our journey is by night, and the moon has not yet risen. In this soft Egyptian twilight all the land is brown and grey, the marshes smoothly white, bristling round their edges with dry, tufted grass and papyrus. Very much of the soil is covered with thistles and low growth of weeds. Villages and trees are few; the plain smooths softly into the sky. Here and there stands a grove of palms, blown and ragged, their ripe fruit hanging in dense clusters. Beneath them—low, colourless, misshapen—a group of huts lies crouching. No lights are there, no movement; but, whilst we look from the hurrying train, a red glow suddenly spreads, breaks into fire, and we leave a village burning.

All round the white stations people lie asleep, hundreds of them, wrapped in blue gowns. None raise their heads to glance at the train. Where we alight we may stroll amongst the prostrate bodies, and not one will stir. The stillness of them, the shapeless rags which cover them, the fantastic attitudes, give one a thrill

How many times in the year past one walked among such silent crowds, the drift and jetsam of a battle? It is of no use to ask why these sleepers have left home to doze about the station. It may be that they await the morning train, or that their domestic insects have combined and driven them out; or, most likely of all reasons, they so act because they are Orientals and irresponsible.

The railway officials are hospitable and courteous to all. If a gentleman loses his gloves they will, and do, arrest the train for seven minutes, whilst he laboriously seeks, and discovers them in his hat. We might wish, indeed, that something eatable, were it only biscuits, were provided on the line, and that a cup of coffee without milk were charged less than a shilling. It is unpleasant also to be locked in one's carriage, but much more unpleasant to be roused by the locked door flying open, cutting one with glass, and refusing to be shut because its hinges have given way.

But if this accident be disagreeable, it wakes one up at least, and shows one a revelation of the desert. White and soft in the moonlight, swell beyond swell, it bounds the course. The barren, jagged rocks throw shadows keen as steel upon the sand. The slender, creeping thistle of the desert springs here and there in delicate tangles. That sense of awful mystery which used to hold my mind when I dwelt in these wastes comes on me again. We and our train are nothing in the picture. Our prosaic comfort, our commonplace business, do not impair one jot the majesty of the Sahara. The train goes by without rending the solitude; it screams, and breaks but for a moment the eternal silence. The Bedouin upon his camel, the little group of tents beside a well, used to people the desert round them, for they are its children, and they live, they show in harmony with it. But this noisy train, these restless infidels, are no more than a vision, thin and fleeting as the smoke which wraps them. Whilst they pass, rattling and fuming, the stillness crushes their clamour; when they have passed the solemnity of the desert closes in, and a loneliness is felt that thrills the mind with awe.

That was a pleasant journey from Simla to Lahore, following the Viceroy. India is all delightful, but I remember no day of placid enjoyment more intense. All the public and private conveyances for hire were not enough to transport those officials who accompanied Lord Lytton. Making my application at the earliest moment, I found that no *tonga* might be had for a week, even so far as Kalka, whence immediate progress was not guaranteed. Under these circumstances, I decided to take a *jampan*, or man-carriage, and to use the old road, a shorter but more difficult path from the plains.

Accordingly, at seven a.m., I was up and ready, waiting as patiently as might be for my devoted bearers. In process of time they arrived, only two hours late, and we stepped forward. It was a delicious day—cold in the shadow, hot in the sun. Riding in a *jampan*, if one be not old nor ill, is no more than an elegant term for walking, with an ugly machine swinging in the rear. It is not in British nature to hear unmoved the heavy breathing and the grunts of overtasked humanity; to feel the constant shifting of the load, and see the perspiration stealing down—and sit aloft, like a god, heedless of mankind. A merciful man uses his conveyance when he can walk no more, and so soon as he is rested out he springs.

The old road is vastly more trying than the new—more broken, more up-and-down, less shaded. When the wooded Simla peak is left behind, one finds himself upon a bare hillside, hot and still as a Scotch glen in August. The road is impassable for vehicles; often, indeed, it is almost washed away, since few Europeans use it at the present time. Amongst the big loose stones and drift one meets a convoy of mules or little donkeys bearing merchandise to Simla. The withered hills lie stretched out, fold within fold, beneath—deep-scored with tracks of winter rain, now beds of pebbles. This route was evidently traced by generations passed away, by sturdy mountaineers to whom ascent and descent were much the same, and time of no importance. It winds, and

sinks, and rises, amongst the bleak fells, parting here a giddy height, there rounding the edge of a long valley, clinging to a precipice, mounting stair on stair to a colossal portal, dropping into hot depths below. The dust lies inches deep; no living thing appears except the vulture, sliding up aloft on equal pinion.

The ways of the *jampān*-bearer are curious to observe. In former times he used to sing—a melancholy chant, in truth, yet soothing to his mind. This generation is too careworn or too prosperous for singing. “In Venice Tasso’s echoes were no more” in Byron’s day, and vainly now would Tennyson exhort “The red man’s babe to dance beyond the sea.” As I rest in my *jampān*, musing to the rhythmic tread of my poor bearers’ feet, I think of a story told me but last night by a very high official of the Punjab. In his district dwelt a gentleman of wealth and fame and long descent, who had been expelled from his ancestral lands by some high-handed warrior of Runjeet Singh. He drifted into the British army, and did noble service at the siege of Delhi. Some while afterwards the robber who had ousted him turned traitor; his lands were confiscated, and given back to the rightful heir. From time to time, so long as this hero lived, he gratefully visited the officer who tells his story, and fought their common battles once again. But yearly he grew less vivacious, less cheerful in his view of public things. My friend asked him the cause. “There is peace now,” he said; “nobody can turn you from your own door again.”

“Ye-es, sahib!” answered the other slowly.

“You are ten times richer than you were. Your peasantry are better fed, better clothed.”

“Ye-es, sahib!”

“You have justice, security, education, &c.”

“Oh, yes, sahib, it is very true!”

Then, with a burst of sincerity, the old Sikh added, “But life isn’t half so funny as it used to be!”

That's what's the matter everywhere, I think : life is not so funny as it used to be. When men were starving, ill-treated, uncared for, they felt the joy of surprise each morning to find themselves still breathing this nether air. And when they thought what might have happened, they sang in mere delight. The morrow did not trouble them, since from their youth up they had been trained to live as though there was no morrow.

That is all a passed existence for the native of to-day. He dreads no more than does his English fellow-subject to be cut up or robbed ; nay, not so much by far, for indeed there is less risk, and what risk there is he does not see. Why should he sing? Relieved from the fear of trouble, he has time to think ; sure of his pittance, his family, and his freedom, he has matter to think upon.

The solace of the *jampan's* weary way is peculiar. The leader of my team, so to speak, raises his voice above the silent tramping, and utters a sentence, which the hind man repeats aloud, that all may hear and profit by the wisdom of the sage. Sometimes the sentence is a long one, in which case the clerk, if I may call him so, records but the last few words. It is uttered in a sing-song, under the breath, dwelling upon the final vowels, and the clerk accurately repeats this intonation. Every one has heard talk of the *jampan*-bearer's grunt. It is, in fact, a curious noise, like "h'm," emphatic and prolonged, which one man takes from another, at five-minute intervals.

Toward four p.m. we reached Sabatha, some twenty miles. Here, wearied out with the endless climbing, I spent the night, starting again at four a.m. Excellent are the arrangements for travel in India. I have stopped nowhere at a dâk bungalow and failed to find a comfortable dinner, clean bed, and good attendance. I must presume, however, that all the bungalows where I have stayed are beneath the average, good as they are. For it is imperative upon the traveller to write his name, his destination, the sum he has paid, and his experiences of the place before leaving ;

this you report to the proper officials, that passengers may not be overcharged, and the house be properly conducted. Remarks I have seen lead me to conclude that in parts of India with which I have not yet become acquainted, turtle soup is habitually supplied at a dâk bungalow, and golden spoons to eat it with. Gentlemen accustomed to enjoy such fare at the moderate cost of half-a-crown feel naturally indignant when a like sum is demanded for plain steaks, however tender and well cooked, and a simple curry to follow. I hope before my travels are done to visit those halcyon realms, where the best that the best of our Punjab dâk bungalows can furnish would be thought execrable, and the neatest *kitmutgars* incompetent.

Meanwhile, awaiting greater bliss, I am very well content to digest a clean and palatable meal in observing the life of Sabatha at eventime. The sports of Hindoo infancy appear to want *ensemble*, if I may so express it. When a large boy in scarlet silk has painfully gathered a crew of little urchins, and seated them in attitudes complex at given distances in a ploughed field, one looks for some further development in a form resembling leap-frog. But the game takes another shape. After placing his men conscientiously in the most uncomfortable positions, our scarlet-coated youth stands in the middle and harangues them. I do not understand what he says, nor apparently do the little boys, for they get up amongst themselves a clandestine game of puss-in-the-corner, which results in a general bolt. Red Jacket pursues, and as they laugh very much he easily catches them and drags them back to resume his discourse.

I know the "form" of Red Jacket, who hastily salutes when he perceives me looking, and talks more learnedly than ever. He is a father's hope, a mother's joy; they believe he will ultimately sit on the bench of the High Court, and they give him to read the immortal memoir of the Hon. Onoocool Chunder Mookerjee.¹

¹ If the reader is not acquainted with this masterpiece of foolery, I pray him, for his health's sake, to get it. Whilst entertaining such respect for the

His uncles growl at him as a little bore, and his cousins give him a kick when they find an opportunity.

How hard the parents work whilst their offspring play. Two women in the field before me were smashing clods with mallets when I arrived, and they are at it still, though dusk has settled down. And as they toil along the narrow terraces recovered from this steep mountain side, a little bullock and a little man pursue them. The little bullock cannot drag a heavy harrow, so the little man mounts on his small machine, adding his own weight.

Upon the edge of the terrace sit two naked babies, smiling at the prospect, and patient as no white children would be for their mothers to finish hammering. To me alone does it occur apparently, amongst the passers-by, that if they smiled much more broadly they might fall and break their necks; but the chances are that my theories are based on error. It is evident that the cherubs would be prematurely translated if they toppled over; but no one seems to admit such a possibility.

I had the fortune to resume my journey in the white splendour of a full moon. A sharp frost cleared the air, and the jagged teeth of the mountains gleamed against an azure sky, whilst the deep abyss below gaped blackly. The great earth serpent itself appeared to well here, snapping at the moon with open jaws. As the full globe rose swiftly higher, as if flying from its enemy, it showed terrace after terrace built out laboriously from the hill sides. They encircled the deep in broken rings, but the moonlight never reached its bottom. Storey upon storey grew to sight, until I seemed to be peering into Babel tower inverted. Many mountain chains have I traversed in the four continents, but no-

memory of an excellent man as makes me sorry that it should be made ridiculous, I cannot refrain from advertising a volume more exquisitely funny than the mind of man had hitherto conceived. These are strong words, but I am not unused to the responsibility of print. The book may be had in India, I suppose, of Messrs. Thacker, in whose Calcutta office it has been reprinted several times. It was quoted rather than criticized by the *Saturday Review* some years ago. Even that ingenious print found comment as useless as gilding upon gold.

where cliffs so headlong or so dizzy. And I saw them at their best, with giant shadows resting on their sides, and a black sea of mystery beneath. Those who visit Simla should travel by the old road. In their praiseworthy efforts to trace out the smoothest route, our engineers have naturally avoided the grandest landscapes of the hills.

Much of the way I tramped in company of an old Sikh chief, mounted on a white Arab, who crooned to himself far ahead of his miscellaneous following. Upon level ground I passed him easily ; but when I stopped to "blow" in breasting some steep height, he drew ahead, and every time each overtook the other this fine old soldier salaamed, and I returned the courtesy. He vanished at length in a cross road, with a final greeting; far above I saw old ruined towers and white walls gleaming in the moonlight.

After two hours' climb I beheld that rare phenomenon, the dawn. People are heard to talk of this extraordinary sight as though it were one of daily occurrence, but probably they repeat antique traditions. There was a time, no doubt, when the dawn was visible every day to every one ; but things have changed. If I may quote my own experience I should say that the dawn is usually beheld now-a-days in a period of war and commotion ; at least, I rarely see it at other times, or, indeed, never. I have still to work out the natural connexion betwixt war and dawn ; but that there is one, and that intimate, my experience shows conclusively.

But what a charming sight it is when the sun climbs up these Himalayan peaks. First to receive it are the snowy ranges far away, which suddenly gleam "a golden rose," in the grey morning sky. Then, long after, an edge of gilding shines upon one topmost crag, leaps from peak to peak, steals down the barren slopes, and transforms the upper world to El Dorado. The dry, burnt grass is fused in orange light. The shadows lie on it dark yet thin, as though wasting in a last struggle. The dizzy vales below are white and chill, expecting the promised warmth.

Sunrise here is indeed a charming apparition ; but it does not last. Before one can admire almost it is gone, and the even daylight spreads, the dust arises, the toilsome slopes begin to bake, and the close dells to stew. A weary descent was that from the hill station of Kussoulie into Kalka. The almonds were blooming in this unaccountable climate, the plums and the cherries showed a cloud of blossom, creepers beyond counting starred the house fronts with blue and red and yellow and snow-white. But one's toes were raw with descending hills, and one's muscles ached with climbing. Vainly, then, does Nature show her beauties, for we crave man's most prosaic work—an inn.

It is reached at length, and our fine appetite will have no delay in the question of breakfast. But how the helpless mind of man revolts when that breakfast comes, and before him is placed a teal, a paltry wild fowl large enough to play with as a fourth remove, but too small for serious contemplation of any but the ornithologist. What high-strung sentiments survive are crushed ! One relapses into cynicism, and one takes the very lowest view of human things. So it is best. The feelings roused by the appearance of that trivial bird are those which befit the chronicler of war. I have never felt more despairing of humanity than at the Kalka breakfast-table, and I was re-nerved for duty.

“How sweet it is hearing the downward stream” to recall these memories. Was I lately moralizing about war and trouble ? These are topics for the working-day whereof my sated soul is weary. “Surely, surely slumber is more sweet than toil !” I will write me a song about Neæra and the wine cup, if the brain must work whilst the body lie supine. I will rest with “brother mariners,” but let us not hear the ill-omened muttering—

* * * “We will not wander more !”

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